

Hafa Adai!

Methamphetamine traffickers sentenced to federal prison. **PAGE 3**

NMC's PTK receives REACH Rewards for fourth year. **PAGE 5**

\$1

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COVID facility is shut down

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Alternative Care Site that was previously housed at the Kanoa Resort Saipan has been completely taken down as the threat of the

COVID-19 pandemic appears to have decreased in the CNMI.

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. CEO Esther Muña has officially confirmed that the

See COVID on Page 4

CDC lifts COVID tests for those from China

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In the last three years, there has been no clear indication

as to when one of the CNMI's largest tourism markets, China, would return, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention's recent decision to rescind the need for a negative COVID-19 test for those

See CDC on Page 4



AMERICAN RED CROSS MONTH

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, left holding Red Cross flag, and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, right also holding flag, are joined by American Red Cross-NMI Chapter executive director John Hirsh, next to Apatang, along with Red Cross volunteers and organizations that support the Red Cross in the CNMI, after a proclamation signed by Palacios that declared March as American Red Cross Month.

Story on Page 3

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

House adopts concurrent resolution on budget edits

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives unanimously adopted yesterday a concurrent resolution

that agrees with the projected \$116.19 million total local revenue and resources of the CNMI government that Gov. Arnold I. Palacios had identified as available for appropriation, to reflect

proposed revisions to the fiscal year 2023 budget law, Public Law 22-22.

With all 20 House members voting "yes" to adopt House

See HOUSE on Page 4

FSM president accuses China of 'political warfare'

By NICK PERRY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Federated State of Micronesia's president accused China of "political warfare" in a letter to other national leaders and discussed switching diplomatic allegiance from China to Taiwan in exchange for \$50 million.

President David Panuelo said China had been using nefarious tactics, including spy-

See FSM on Page 4



Panuelo

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Days until
'touchback rule'
takes effect on
Sept. 30, 2023:
200

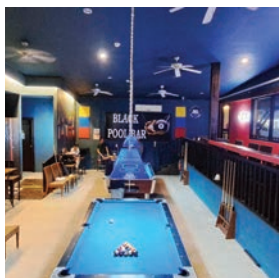
INSIDE



LOCAL

Jesus "Jesse" Sablan will be graduating from SIS in May and will head to Colombia University.

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BUSINESS

Black 8 Pool Bar was born when the COVID pandemic shut down Ken Chen's tourist company.

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LIFE & STYLE

"Everything Everywhere All at Once" wins best picture at the 95th Academy Awards.

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GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

A son of the CNMI brings pride

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Backed by an impressive list of accomplishments at just 17 years old, Saipan International School's Jesus "Jesse" Sablan will be finishing up his senior year in high school this summer and will be turning to the next chapter of his life when he heads to New York City and Colombia University, where he intends to study biomedical engineering.

Although this is going to be a big step for a Saipan-born and bred lad, Sablan, who is a son of Jason and Shirley Sablan, is excited to see what's ahead. "It's going to be a huge dynamic shift. ...I'm just so ready to go out there and learn. I'm so ready to meet new people, and just to see what's out there in the world. Obviously I'm a bit nervous and [also] sad that I'm leaving my family and friends here, but I know that they are

rooting for me so it's up to me to honor that."

Sablan would be studying at the school of Applied Engineering and Science within Colombia University, and will be pursuing biomedical engineering. He applied at the school late last year and was understandably nervous but remained hopeful and was very pleased at the news of his acceptance, knowing how difficult it is to be part of the 2% to 1% of applicants that

actually get accepted to this Ivy League school.

Sablan will be graduating from SIS this May, but will still be competing nationally for speech and debate with Team CNMI this May-June one last time, where he has been competing representing the CNMI for four years now. He was also recently recognized as an Honorary Delegate for the GEC Model United Nations, which recently took place in Jeju, South Korea, where he had already twice won Best Delegate for



Jesus "Jesse" Sablan has been accepted to Colombia University.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Model United Nations.

Sablan noted that he does plan on being a lawyer someday, and that law and justice are what he envisions as his future career path. "My goal is to become an attorney, and I 100% plan to come back and work on Saipan."

When talking about people who have inspired him, Sablan said he is very grateful to his teachers and his family. "It's really my older siblings setting the example for me. ...My older siblings really paved the way as the examples for me and my younger siblings, and just like, the expectations that I needed to meet. Because being in a family with five siblings, we get competitive, I feel like, or at least I'm very competitive with them..."

Sablan's siblings are Annabelle Sablan, who is a senior student at the School of Architecture of Syracuse University; Jon Paul Sablan, who is a senior student at the School of Biological Sciences in UC Irvine; Jason Sablan, a sophomore student at the School of Economics in UC Berkeley; Soledad Sablan, who also studies at SIS, and Jose Peter Sablan, who is at Saipan Community School.

Sablan said he feels it's his duty to help out his younger siblings, whether its homework, projects etc. "A lot of my success is because of them." He laughed "...because if they didn't exist maybe I wouldn't be as competitive as I am."

Sablan shared that as a young person he'd constantly be looking through instructional videos on how to better do or succeed in areas of his life, and now, although he's not one for publicity, he knows that his younger self would have appreciated and approved advice.

"Coming from an island that is very small and lacks certain resources, you know

no one is going to do it for you, you 've got to do it yourself. If you're not going to aim high, then your goal won't be high. I would say that when I plan my things, I try to plan and achieve to the highest extent...but what advice I'd give is to always know your limits, and to know how far you can stretch yourself because you know if you aim too high, then you're not only dishonoring yourself, but you're dishonoring everyone that you're representing. So definitely aim high, but definitely, also check in with yourself when you are doing your things."

As a student with so many achievements that have led him to represent the CNMI, Sablan says he feels privileged and honored. "When I go places, I'm very proud of where I come from. ...It is a lot of pride when I represent Saipan, but it takes a lot of responsibility. ...Whether its speech and debate or MUN, I plan accordingly and I represent Saipan to the best of my abilities."

This future member of the SIS Class of 2023 happily shared that he won't be the only student entering an Ivy League school this fall. He said one of his friends from Mount Carmel School has also been accepted and they will be in the same class. Some of the things Sablan is looking forward to is feeling the change of environment, and joining specific clubs. As he loves community services, he plans to join the university's Rotary Club, and other clubs such as band, Modern United Nations, and the Asian and Pacific Islander law club. "Though I am very proud to meet other people, and [hear about] their cultures, I'm very proud to share mine as well."

Sablan is a grandson of former lieutenant governor Jesus and Annie Sablan and Roman and Ana Tudela.



A Two Day Tournament Event

Northern Marianas College Foundation

GOLF OPEN

An event to benefit higher education in the CNMI

MARCH 18 & 19, 2023

LAOLAO BAY GOLF & RESORT SAIPAN

For the first time, NMC's tournament will be a two-day event and will be held on March 18 and 19, 2023, on the East and West Courses of the Laolao Bay Golf and Resort.

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- 2023 Toyota 4Runner SR5 from Atkins Kroll
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- 2023 Nissan Rogue from Joeten Motors
- 2023 Mitsubishi Outlander from Triple J Motors
- \$10K Cash Prize from Ambyth Shipping and Seafix Inc.
- \$10K Shopping Spree from Top Shelf Wine and Spirits
- \$5K Cash Prize from Pacifica Insurance
- \$3K Cash Prize from McDonald's of Saipan
- YETI 160 Cooler from Boarderline

• Tournament Fee: \$250
• First place winners in all flights will each receive \$500
• Second place finishers will receive \$300
• Third place finishers will receive \$200
• The vehicles depicted in this advertisement may not be exactly as shown.



REGISTER at www.marianas.edu/golf











Methamphetamine traffickers sentenced to federal prison

Three foreign nationals—two men and a woman—were recently sentenced to federal prison for conspiring to possess methamphetamine, or “ice,” with the intent to distribute and conspiring to maintain a drug-involved premises.

According to a U.S. Attorney’s Office news release yesterday, Huaishu Wang, 40, was convicted in the U.S. District Court for the NMI of conspiracy to possess methamphetamine with the intent to distribute and was sentenced to 188 months’ imprisonment, three years supervised release, 100 hours of community service, and a \$100 mandatory assessment.

His co-defendant, Hongjie

Li, 48, was convicted of conspiracy to possess methamphetamine with the intent to distribute, and was sentenced to 57 months’ imprisonment, three years supervised release, 50 hours of community service, and a \$100 mandatory assessment.

The third co-defendant, Yongbing Ni, 54, was convicted of conspiracy to maintain a drug-involved premises and sentenced to 10 months’ imprisonment, three years of supervised release, and a \$100 mandatory assessment.

These defendants were also ordered to report to a U.S. Immigration Officer for deportation proceedings as a

condition of their supervised release. The news release did not state the nationalities of the three defendants.

On May 3, 2022, Li claimed a package mailed from Canada to a private mail facility on Saipan. The package contained 858 grams of methamphetamine. Li transported the package to a residence, where she lived with Wang and Ni. After the package was delivered to the residence, federal and local law enforcement agents executed a search war-

rant and discovered the three co-defendants were working together to distribute methamphetamine across the island.

Inside the residence, agents discovered 214 grams of methamphetamine packaged in 46 baggies, an additional 15 grams of methamphetamine, digital scales, three BB-guns similar in appearance to semiautomatic 9mm and .45 caliber handguns, an Airsoft rifle similar in appearance to a 5.56mm rifle, and \$68,408 in U.S. currency. The street value of the drugs was at least \$540,000.

Shawn N. Anderson, U.S. Attorney for the Districts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, stated, “Our office is committed to aggressively prosecuting drug offenses in the CNMI. Substantial penalties apply to many of these crimes. Considering the effects of methamphetamine on our communities, we must make every effort toward deterrence and accountability.”

“Synthetic drugs, such as methamphetamine, are easy to manufacture, highly addictive, and responsible for the growing number of deaths in our com-

munities,” said DEA Honolulu District Office assistant special agent in charge Victor Vazquez. “Individuals who seek to profit on these dangerous drugs and distribute them will be targeted and held accountable.”

This investigation was led by the Drug Enforcement Administration Los Angeles Field Division, Guam Resident Office, Saipan Post of Duty. The case was prosecuted by Albert Flores, Jr., and Garth Backe, assistant U.S. Attorneys in the District of the Northern Mariana Islands. *(PR/Saipan Tribune)*

Internet discounts for low-income households, federal aid recipients

Low-income households and recipients of some federal assistance programs may qualify for a discount on new or current internet service and discounts on digital services, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) in his *e-kilili* newsletter over the weekend.

Examples of federal assistance programs are Medicaid, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Federal Pell Grant, and veterans’ pension and survivors benefits.

Sablan said these discounts are available through the Affordable Connectivity Program, which is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company with oversight by the Federal Communications Commission.

The Affordable Connectiv-

ity Program helps low-income households pay for internet service and connected devices like a laptop or tablet.

Sablan said internet providers in the Marianas that are participating in the program include IT&E, Docomo, U2 Connect Now, Tone Communication Services, Pacific Data Systems, and Dailytel.

An eligible household could receive up to a \$30/month discount on internet service; up to a \$75/month discount if the household is on qualifying Tribal lands; a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer (with a co-payment of more than \$10 but less than \$50); and a low cost service plan that may be fully covered through the Affordable Connectivity Program. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

March is American Red Cross Month

The American Red Cross-NMI Chapter takes the spotlight this month, with Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang proclaiming yesterday the entire month of March as American Red Cross Month.

In attendance at the proclamation signing yesterday morning at the Office of the Governor’s conference room were American Red Cross-NMI Chapter executive director John Hirsh, board chair Dr. Joshua Wise, board members Tim Lang, Dr. Bobby Cruz, Chris Concepcion, Brent Deleon Guerrero, volunteers, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services representatives, and the Homeland Security and Emergency Management represented by Jack Diaz.

“We celebrate the humanitarian spirit of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and reaffirm our commitment to help ensure no one faces a crisis alone. ... Caring for one another is at the heart of the community and exemplified by the people

of the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands, whose simple acts of kindness through the Red Cross provide help and hope in people’s most difficult moments, continuing the lifesaving legacy of Clara Barton who founded the organization more than 140 years ago to prevent and alleviate human suffering,” the proclamation reads.

Both Palacios and Apatang thanked the Red Cross and its volunteers, along with their partners, for their dedication and assistance to the people of the CNMI in times of need and for always being the first responders.

In his remarks, Wise said, “The American Red Cross is

providing critical assistance to the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands in response to several natural disasters that have occurred in the region... along with smoke alarm installations [and] educating our children on disaster preparedness. ...The American Red Cross provides services and support to members of our armed forces, veterans and their families before, during, and after. Our emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion enables us to value our differences and provide fair equity to our unique perspectives, culture and community.”

In Hirsh’s remarks, he said, “It’s really a privilege to be part of this organization. We’re privileged to work with our partners like the DFEMS team

here. ...We’re really grateful for everybody’s contribution and we need not only volunteers, but we need the donor support as well. ...If you know anyone out there who would like to support the Red Cross, please do it financially and also with their hands. Please come to join us in our work.”

For more information about the American Red Cross of the Northern Mariana Islands, visit <https://www.redcross.org/local/northern-mariana-islands/about-us.html>

This April 22, the 34th Annual Red Cross Walkathon will take place on April 22 near the Guma Sakman building in Susupe. The walk will feature a 10K, 5K, and 2K course along the Beach Road Pathway. *(Leigh Gases)*

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

ROBERTO P. ROSAL JR.
Petitioner,
vs.
MARY JOY T. ROSAL
Respondent.

FCD-DI
CIVIL ACTION
NO. 23-0068

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on the file with the Court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 504974 Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by Default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 17th day of February, 2023.

/s/
CLERK OF COURT

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055 SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMI-PORTS.COM

INVITATION FOR BID
CPA-IFB-002-23

PROCUREMENT AND DELIVERY OF ONE TRACTOR AND MOWER TO BENJAMIN TAISACAN MANGLONA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ROTA

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting bids for the procurement and delivery of one Tractor & Mower for the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona, Rota International Airport.

The Bid Package may be picked up beginning March 14, 2023 at the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building, Saipan International Airport upon payment of an administrative fee of \$100.00 in cash, cashier's check, or credit card.

All bids shall be sealed and marked on the cover package: “Bid: Tractor/Mower for the Rota International Airport-CPA-IFB-002-23. CONFIDENTIAL”

One (1) original and two (2) copies of the bid must be received at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, 2nd Floor-Arrivals Building, Saipan International Airport, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, not later than **2:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, Friday, April 14, 2023**. Bid opening will be at 3:00 p.m. same day at the Procurement Department, 2nd Floor—Departure Building, Saipan International Airport.

Questions and/or clarifications regarding this IFB, the Tractor Mower and its Specifications shall be in writing and emailed to sharene.manglona@cnmiports.com (Rota Ports Manager) with copy to atudela@cnmiports.com (Alex Tudela/Procurement Officer) no later than April 3, 2023. **Any question or clarification will not be entertained after this date.** Answers to questions and/or clarifications will be provided to each vendor or individual receiving a bid package.


Bids received after the above closing date and time of this Invitation for Bid will not be accepted and will be returned unopened. CPA reserves the right to reject any and all bids if in its opinion to do so is in CPA's best interest.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ **EDWARD B. MENDIOLA**
Executive Director

Date _____

CHCC MOBILE OUTREACH CLINIC
www.chcc.health



Child Wellness Check

MARCH 15, 2023
1PM - 4:30 PM

DANDAN CHILDREN'S PARK

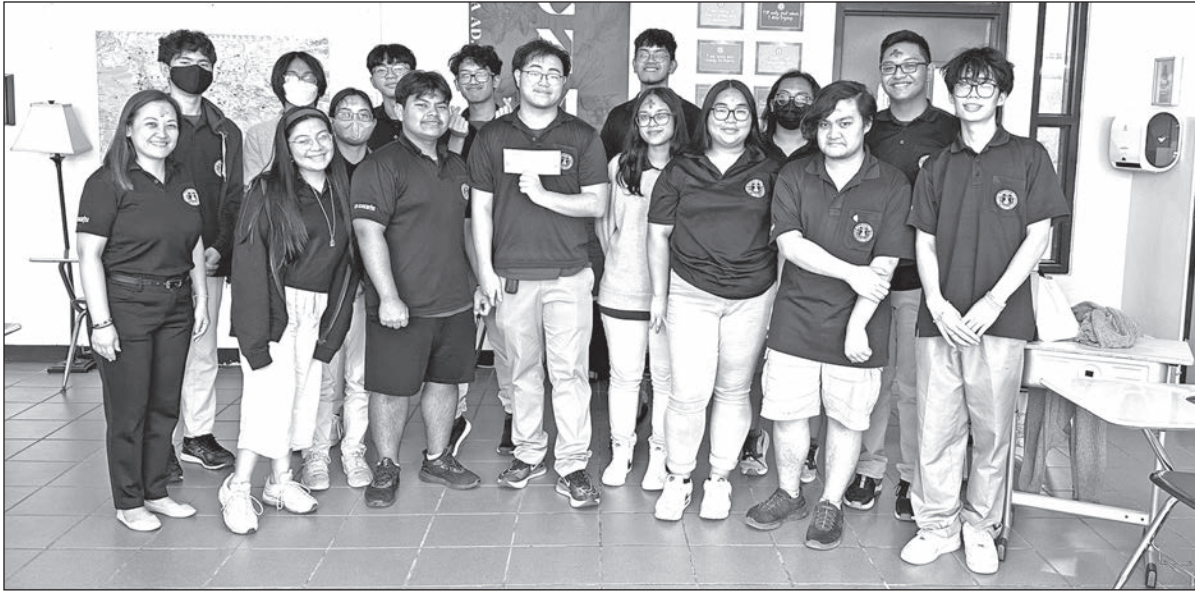
Walk-In Services will include:

- Developmental/ Behavioral Assessments
- Measurements & Growth
- Other screening tests
- Anticipatory Guidance
- Flu Vaccination
- Resources & Referrals

Medicaid and most private insurances are accepted.

See our schedule at www.chcc.health and follow us on [f](https://www.facebook.com/cnmichcc) [i](https://www.instagram.com/cnmichcc) [t](https://www.tiktok.com/@cnmichcc) @cnmichcc for updates!

Further Questions?
Call 670-234-8950 ext. 2016 or 670-287-9929/9927



ETC DONATION

Mount Carmel School thanks MMC & Pacific Clubs, LLC for their recent \$2,000 Education Tax Credit donation. Mount Carmel School expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation. In the photo are Mount Carmel School's senior class of 2023 posing with the Education Tax Credit donation.

MCS

FSM

From Page 1

ing and offering bribes, in an effort to ensure that if it goes to war with Taiwan, Micronesia would be aligned with China rather than the United States, or would at least abstain from taking sides.

Panuelo sent the 13-page letter dated March 9, which was obtained by The Associated Press, to state governors and other political leaders of the Pacific nation.

The letter represented an unusually frank assessment of China's motives in the region and laid bare the financial incentives for smaller countries to switch diplomatic allegiance.

Should Micronesia switch allegiance to Taiwan, it would represent a rare win for the self-governing island, after several Pacific nations switched allegiance from Taiwan to China in recent years.

"I believe that our values are presently being used against us" Panuelo wrote in his letter. "One of the rea-

sons that China's political warfare is successful in so many arenas is that we are bribed to be complicit, bribed to be silent."

He gave examples, saying that when the vice president was a senator, he was asked by China's ambassador to accept an envelope filled with money, which he refused.

China denied the allegations.

"We noted relevant reports, in which the smear and accusations against China are completely inconsistent with the facts," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a daily briefing Friday.

"We've always respected Micronesia's development path that it has chosen in light of its own national conditions and have supported the Micronesian side in safeguarding independence," Mao said.

Panuelo gave other examples of what he called China's "grey zone" activities. He said that Chinese research vessels had been operating inside Micronesia's ocean territory to spy, by mapping potential resources and submarine travel paths.

He said that when he traveled to Fiji in July to attend the Pacific Islands Forum, he was followed around by two Chinese men, who Micronesia discovered worked for the Chinese Embassy in Fiji and included an intelligence officer.

"To be clear: I have had direct threats against my personal safety from PRC (People's Republic of China) officials acting in an official capacity," Panuelo wrote.

He said that in February, he met with Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu and told him that Micronesia would need money for its trust fund if it was to switch diplomatic allegiance.

"I was transparent with Foreign Minister Wu; we project we need an injection of approximately \$50 million to meet our future needs," Panuelo wrote. "We can and will receive this, over a three-year period, if and when we establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan."

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

CDC

From Page 1

traveling from China to the United States, it now appears the return of the CNMI's once-thriving Chinese market is just right around the corner.

The CDC, which is under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, announced over the weekend that it has lifted its previous order requiring travelers from China to provide a negative COVID-19 test prior to departing from China to the United States.

The CDC website states: "On March 10, 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention... has rescinded order titled 'Requirements for Negative Pre-Departure COVID-19 Test Result or Documentation of Recovery from COVID-19 for Aircraft Passengers Traveling to the United States from the People's Republic of China.'"

According to CDC, this rescission took effect for flights departing to the United States from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Macau, and others after 3pm last March 10.

"This means that starting March 10, 2023, at 3pm ET, air passengers

will no longer need to get tested and show the negative COVID-19 test result, or show documentation of recovery from COVID-19, prior to boarding a flight to the U.S. from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Macau, or through a Designated Airport," CDC states.

This is great news for the CNMI, according to MVA, as this means traveling to Saipan, as part of the United States, would be made easier.

According to the official order, on Dec. 30, 2022, the CDC issued an order prohibiting the boarding of passengers two years of age or older on an itinerary that included the United States on any aircraft departing from the PRC, including the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau; or any aircraft departing from a Designated Airport if the passenger had been in China within the 10 days prior to their departure for the United States, unless the passenger presented paper or digital documentation of a negative result for a COVID-19 viral test taken no more than two calendar days before the departure of the flight or documentation of recovery from COVID-19.

"The order was issued in re-

sponse to concerns that COVID-19 cases were surging in the PRC. At that time, mitigation measures were largely not known to be in use in the PRC, and there were significant gaps in data and information on cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. Furthermore, the PRC had shared little genomic sequencing data and there were concerns that any new virus variants may have been undetected. Therefore, CDC concluded that the order was a reasonable and necessary measure in light of the surging cases in the PRC and gaps in information concerning the status of COVID-19 in the PRC," said CDC.

However, current available epidemiologic data through global datasets and modeling results indicate that the COVID-19 surge experienced by the PRC has returned to a baseline level.

"According to World Health Organization data, daily cases peaked at 7,000,000 cases per day on Dec. 23, 2022, then declined 99% by Jan. 24, 2023, leveling off around 20,000 cases per day from Jan. 24 through Feb. 21, 2023," the order stated.

This massive decline in cases seen per day and other available data prompted the CDC to rescind its December 2022 order.

ERRATUM

A *Saipan Tribune* promotional slide that was featured in the newspaper's social media pages on Facebook and Instagram yesterday incorrectly paired the picture of acting Department of Corrections commissioner Anthony Torres with the story "Man sued for non-payment of lease and neglecting residence." This was a mistake. Torres' image was supposed to go with the story, "DOC chief doubles down on austerity measures." Our apologies for this error.

HOUSE

From Page 1

Concurrent Resolution 23-1, the resolution will now be transmitted to the Senate for action.

At the end of yesterday afternoon's session, House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) said they are just waiting for the House Ways and Means Committee on the changes to the budget.

Villagomez said he is looking at possibly calling for a session either this Friday afternoon or Saturday morning, depending on when the Ways and Means can get the budget out of committee.

House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) introduced HCR 23-1 yesterday. Several other representatives co-sponsored the resolution.

The concurrent resolution places the total estimated gross budgetary resources for fiscal year 2023 at \$164,198,068. Minus earmarks and transfers out in the total amount of \$48,004,271, the total local revenue and resources available for appropriation in fiscal year 2023 is \$116,193,797.

Adding the \$5,407,897 budget for the Department of Public Lands, the grand total local revenue and resources available for appropriation is \$121,601,694.

In an interview after the session, Yumul said that passing HCR 23-1 is the first step of the budget process. He said the Ways and Means Committee had a meeting yesterday morning and would convene that afternoon to start a budget process sub-

mitted by the administration. He said the resolution will go to the Senate and they will have time to review it.

"We will try to finish the budget by the end of the week, or the next couple of days," Yumul said. He said the numbers will remain the same and that they are not touching anything.

He said the meeting later that afternoon is to discuss the proposal of the administration.

Although they have already passed the concurrent resolution, Yumul said the Ways and Means Committee can start the process right away so they can have a product by the end of the week.

With respect to the current fiscal year 2023, then-governor Ralph DLG Torres had identified projected resources in the amount of \$150,415,492 for the CNMI government and related agencies for fiscal year 2023. This resulted in the enactment of Public Law 22-22, the Appropriations Act of 2023 which had a total amount identified for appropriations at \$104,374,369.

Palacios has now determined that the amount of \$104.37 million should now be revised.

Palacios submitted last March 8 a proposed revision to the Appropriations and Budget Authority Act for FY 2023, that set the level of total revenue prior to transfers out at \$164,198,069, minus earmarks of \$1,361,918, to reflect a net amount of \$162,836,151 for the government and related agencies for fiscal year 2023.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

COVID

From Page 1

ACS site at Kanoa Resort has been taken down because COVID-19 no longer poses a huge threat to the CNMI community, and because the National Public Health Emergency that was declared to combat the pandemic has not been renewed.

"In the CNMI, COVID-19 community levels have been consistently low for months now. So the threat is no longer there to keep the tents that are already deteriorating anyway," she said.

Around the same time last year, CHCC officially placed the Alternative Care Site at Kanoa Resort in a "warm" state, essentially closing the ACS facility but leaving the site on standby in case of another COVID-19 surge.

Muña said that putting the ACS in a "warm" state was the best decision at the time, as opposed to the alternative, which was completely shutting it down, because it kept the CNMI prepared for whatever COVID-19 variant may pop up next.

However, today, a year later, CHCC has completely shut the ACS

down as the world transitions into treating the once deadly virus as endemic instead of a pandemic.

Back in 2020, the ACS was established to protect the CNMI community from a COVID-19 spread by separating COVID-19 positive patients from the main hospital.

The ACS was created after the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services projected that the CNMI would see 6,000 COVID-19 cases by June 2020. Fortunately that did not happen.

When the CNMI Office of the Governor asked what hotels would be willing to host the ACS, Tan Holdings Corp., which owns Kanoa Resort, stepped forward and allowed the transformation of Kanoa Resort into a state-of-the-art Alternative Care Site. The contract to use Kanoa as an ACS expired last October 2022 and has not been renewed.

The ACS was officially unveiled to the public in October 2020.

The ACS took up the entire left side of the hotel lobby and was equipped with about 50 to 70 intensive care unit beds and over 115 mid-level care rooms.

NMC's PTK receives REACH Rewards for fourth year

The Beta Lambda Psi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at Northern Marianas College has been named a recipient of the REACH Rewards program for the fourth year in a row. The recognition is part of PTK's REACH Rewards program, which celebrates and rewards Phi Theta Kappa chapters excelling in membership development by achieving exceptionally high rates of membership acceptance in the 2022 calendar year.

"We are thrilled to be recognized for our hard work and dedication to increasing awareness about Phi Theta Kappa and its benefits," chapter adviser Kaelani Demapan said. "Membership in PTK provides our students with the opportunity to enhance their college experi-

ence and develop leadership skills that will benefit them throughout their lives."

"A huge shoutout to our advisers—Malysa Castro, William Hunter, and Alexis Cabrera-Manglona—and current PTK officers—president Anushi Joshi, vice president Vincent Fajardo, treasurer Maxine Rabago, membership secretary Ainah Chargualaf, and recording and public relations secretary MaryJo Camacho—for encouraging their peers to join PTK," Demapan added.

The chapter earned eight graduation stoles as part of the REACH Rewards program, which aims to increase membership acceptance rates and provides access to PTK benefits to as many students as possible.

"We congratulate the Beta



NMC

The members of the Beta Lambda Psi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at Northern Marianas College.

Lambda Psi chapter on this outstanding achievement," said Lynn Tincher-Ladner, Ph.D., president and CEO of Phi Theta Kappa. "Their dedication and commitment

to membership recruitment campaigns are commendable, and we hope other chapters will follow their example."

Established by Missouri

two-year college presidents in 1918, the PTK Honor Society serves to recognize and encourage the academic achievement of two-year college students and provide

opportunities for individual growth and development through honors, leadership, and service programming.

For more information, contact ptk@marianas.edu. (NMC)

Free webinars on federal contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free webinars, which are held every Thursday from 10am to 11:30am via Zoom. Links are emailed to all registered attendees 30 minutes before the webinar.

■ **March 16, 2023 – How to Get WOSB Certified – The Women-Owned Small Business program encourages women to pursue Federal contracts in historically, male dominated industries. We will discuss the online certification process as well as supporting document requirements.**

■ **March 23, 2023 – Mentor-Protégé Programs – SBA and DOD Mentor-Protégé programs allow small busi-**

nesses to team up with large businesses without running afoul of affiliation regulations. The Guam PTAC will update you on the eligibility requirements, the application process, and follow-up requirements for both programs.

■ **March 30, 2023 – How to Get SDVOSB Certified – SBA recently took over Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Certification from the VA. The Guam PTAC will update you on the eligibility requirements, the application process, and follow-up requirements for SBA's newest certification.**

Register on our website: <https://www.guamptac.com/news-and-events.php> (PR)

Propst certifies official results of Youth Congress election

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

House of Representatives floor leader Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) has certified the official results of the election for the 2023 CNMI Youth Congress, which was held last Monday.

CNMI Youth Congress secretary/coordinator Luis John DLG Castro informed Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) Wednesday that eight schools voted to determine their rep-

resentatives to the 19th CNMI Youth Congress.

After the tabulations undertaken by each school's officials, the results were certified by the staff of the Legislative Bureau and the Youth Congress Office, and Propst certified the results.

Twelve candidates battled for vacant seats in eight different public and private high schools.

At Marianas High School, Peaches Fiona Bayot won

over three candidates by receiving 210 out of 697 votes, or 30.1%.

At Kagman High School, Vinnie Juan Q. Sablan prevailed over Jaidiann Justis Cabrera by obtaining 140 of 224 total votes, or 65.4%. Sablan is the son of former senator Vinnie Sablan (R-Saipan).

Six candidates ran unopposed. They are Ayden Sean C. Yumul of Grace Christian Academy, Maili I. B. Peter

of Mt. Carmel School, Aden Chonne Hocog Calvo of Rota H. Inos Junior-Senior High School, Filomenaleonisa T. Iakopo of Saipan International School, Miyckiel Josh B. Cabrera of Saipan Southern High School, and incumbent youth senator Ysabella Nikonika Rita V. Palacios of Tinian Junior-Senior High School.

Castro said this year's biennial election is significant as it's been 25 years since the very first CNMI Youth Congress was convened.



Propst



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: cnmi-hcplb@hcplb.net
Website: cnmi-hcplb.net



Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on **Thursday, March 16, 2023, at 8 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Board of Professional Licensing Conference Room, BPL Building on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (02/22/2023)
- V. Public Comments
- VI. Chairperson's Report
- VI. A. Off-island Wholesalers
- VII. Director's Report
- VII. A. OPA Filing of Statement of Financial Interest for Calendar Year 2022
- VII. B. Independent Dental Practice Monitoring Reviewer – Dr. Song Rhim
- VIII. Investigator's Report - None
- IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
- IX. A. Governor's Office
- IX. 1. Revisions to the Appropriation and Budget Authority Act for FY2023
- IX. 2. Budget Call for FY2024
- IX. B. Legislature
- X. Old Business
- X. A. Proposed Amendments for § 185-10-2600 - Dentists, Dental Assistants, Dental Hygienists and Dental Therapists
- XI. New Business
- XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
- XII. A. New Application
- XII. B. Renewal Application
- XIII. Miscellaneous Business
- XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
- XV. Announcements
- XV. A. Next Meeting Date
- XV. B. Adjournment of Meeting



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

NMHC hereby publicly discloses that Nicolas Pinaula, an employee of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation- CDBG-DR Program, intends to apply for scholarship assistance under the Workforce Development Program (WDP), a recipient of CDBG-DR funds.

Said applicant has been determined to be a member of a group or class of low-moderate income students intended to be beneficiaries of the assisted activity and is applying to receive generally the same benefits being made available to the group or class. Mr. Pinaula is not and shall not be involved in the handling of the scholarship application.

NMHC discloses this possible conflict pursuant to 24 CFR 92.356 in order to allow any interested persons to comment before the application is considered for an exception under the applicable conflict regulations.

Written comments may be faxed to Fax No.: (670) 234-9451, mailed to P.O. Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhcgov.net on or before March 21, 2023.

Dated this 7th day of March, 2023.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

NMHC hereby publicly discloses that on August 27, 2021, Farah Jane Reyes, an immediate family member of Remedio S. Reyes, NMHC employee, applied for assistance under the Community Development Block Grant- Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Housing Program.

Said applicant has been determined to be a member of a group or class of low-income persons intended to be beneficiaries of the assisted activity and is applying to receive generally the same benefits being made available to the group or class. Mrs. Remedio S. Reyes is not and shall not be involved in the handling of this loan application.

NMHC discloses this possible conflict pursuant to 24 CFR 92.356 in order to allow any interested persons to comment before the application is considered for an exception under the applicable conflict regulations.

Written comments may be faxed to Fax No.: (670) 234-9451, mailed to P.O. Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhcgov.net on or before Tuesday, March 21, 2023.

Dated this 7th day of March, 2023.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

SCS achieves music excellence at Guam’s music festival



SCS

The Saipan Community School Ukulele Ensemble received Gold at the Tumon Bay Music Festival’s Solo and Ensemble Competition on March 4, 2023, during a performance at the Micronesia Mall. This group is composed of the SCS Ukulele Band’s top 12 elite 7th and 8th-grade performers. Its members include Byul An, Hannah Chae, Erine So, Morgan Finco, Celine Park, David Park, Emma Sablan, Jose Sablan, Joan Song, Annabella Tudela, Joshua Yoo, and Sharon Zhang. This ensemble represented SCS’s 23-year-old ukulele/music program that aims to instill the love of ukulele, music, and performing in all its students. Larry and Kui Lee have been the father-son directors and teachers of this hardworking, fun-loving group for the past four years. The SCS Ukulele Ensemble and Band are grateful they were invited back to the TBMF and are blessed to have the opportunity for these performances and exciting learning experiences.



SCS

The Saipan Community School Jazz Band received Silver Ranking in the 2023 Tumon Bay Music Festival’s Solo and Ensemble Competition. Ruthi Fruit directs the SCS Jazz Band. She loves working in small ensembles with the piano. The group members are Joshua YooByul on percussion, flutists Byul An, Joan Song, and Celine Park, William Guo on tenor saxophone, Elijah Pangelinan on clarinet, Richard Zhao on drums, David Park on alto saxophone, Jose Sablan on trumpet, Ji Hun Park on trumpet, and Patrick McDonald on alto saxophone. They all love playing in the Jazz Band. SCS’s Band Program is in its 35th year. It began with a concert band, and the school’s students received the program so well it quickly branched out to include a jazz band. Together, these two programs have allowed SCS students to appreciate diversity in music as they expand their talents.



SCS

The Saipan Community School Small Ensemble competed and earned Silver Ranking at the Tumon Bay Music Festival on March 4. This group is proud to represent SCS’ 35-year-old band program. This group is composed of 12 middle school students. Joshua Yoo has been playing drums since second grade. His excellent math skills make him an impressive percussionist. Vivian Chung is their clarinetist. She also has experience playing trumpet, piano, and violin. Byul An, Celine Park, and Joan Song have all played the flute since 4th grade. Park and Song are both part of the Saipan Pacific Wind Band. William Guo is their tenor saxophonist. He has experience playing over six instruments. Elijah Pangelinan has played the clarinet since 4th grade. He is currently learning the piano. Richard Zhao has played drums since 3rd grade. David Park has played the alto saxophone for half a decade. Park is part of some major groups on Saipan like the SCS Advanced Band and the Saipan Pacific Winds. Jose Sablan has played trumpet since fourth grade. Ji Hun Park mainly plays trumpet, but he also knows how to play guitar, piano, recorder, and flute. Patrick McDonald has played alto saxophone since 4th grade. He has played over five instruments. Together they are passionate about making beautiful music and hope to continue doing so in the future.



SCS

The Saipan Community School Ukulele Band performed at the Tumon Bay Music Festival’s 2023 Jazz, Rock, and Beyond Event at Guam’s Ypao Beach Amphitheater, on March 5. The Saipan Community School Ukulele Band is part of a proud tradition of cultural music education at Saipan Community School. The SCS Ukulele Band is composed of 7th and 8th graders, many of whom have been learning to play the instrument at SCS since they were in 3rd grade. The 23-year-old music program aims to instill the love of ukulele, music, and performing in all its students. Larry and Kui Lee have been the father-son directors and teachers of this hardworking, fun-loving group for the past four years. The SCS Ukulele Band is grateful to be invited back to the TBMF, and looks forward to many more years of celebrating the beauty of learning what music has to offer.



SCS

The Saipan Community School Quartet received Silver in the Tumon Bay Music Festival. This quartet is a group of talented musicians who came together through their shared passion for music. The members—David Park on saxophone, Vivian Chung on clarinet, Joan Song on flute, and Byul An on flute—met while performing in the SCS band and decided to form their own quartet last year. With their diverse backgrounds and musical experiences, they bring a unique sound to their performances and always aim to captivate their audiences.



SCS

Saipan Community School 8th grade soloist Joan Song received Silver at the Tumon Bay Music Festival. She has been playing the flute since 4th grade on her own and began taking professional lessons in 7th grade. Song loves playing pop and jazz music. She is in the Saipan Community School Advanced Band and the Saipan Pacific Wind Band. Song was also part of the Saipan Junior Band last year. She plays in the SCS band concerts and SPW band concerts and participated in the Marianas Friendship Concert, along with Guam Youth Orchestra, on Saipan.



SCS

Eighth-grader Byul An, who is an Saipan Community School soloist, is a flutist who received Silver at the Tumon Bay Music Festival. She is self-taught on flute but also plays the ukulele and piano. An has also been a part of the Saipan Winds Band Festival. She is always there for the band. An loves helping children learn the flute. And she is grateful for the experience of performing at the Tumon Bay Music Festival.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB23-CHCC/MICAH-007
MATERNAL, INFANT, CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH (MICAH) PROGRAM

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 24, 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

“LEASE OF VEHICLES”

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP23-CHCC/EHDP-006
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DISEASE PREVENTION (EHDP)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 24, 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

“CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION SERVICES-EHDP LABORATORY”

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

ROBERT T. TORRES, ESQ. (F0197)
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 500730 CK, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Petitioner

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

IN RE THE MATTER : **FCD-GU CIVIL**
OF THE PETITION TO : **ACTION NO.**
APPOINT GENERAL : **23-0089**
GUARDIANSHIP

FOR: **NOTICE OF
HEARING ON
PETITIONER'S
PETITION FOR
APPOINTMENT
OF GENERAL
GUARDIANSHIP**

YOON, JAE GUK, .
An Adult Person .
(Incompetent). .

By: .
YOON, GIL AH K, .

Petitioner: .

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Court shall hear the above-entitled matter on this 3rd day of April 2023 at 9:00 a.m. for Petitioner Yoon, Gil Ah K's Notice of Hearing on Petition for Appointment of General Guardianship. The parties are directed to be present at the hearing at which time the Court shall consider the Petition.

Dated this 2nd day of March, 2023

/s/ _____
Deputy Clerk of Court

MCS inducts 14 new National Honor Society members

Fourteen high school students were inducted into Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the National Honor Society in a ceremony on Friday, March 10, 2023, at Mount Carmel Cathedral.

The ceremony was led by Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez, school administrators, and society officers.

The inductees were selected by a faculty council that reviewed applications from sophomores and upperclassmen who had maintained a grade point average of 3.0 and had demonstrated how they had fulfilled the society's values of scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

This year's inductees are Elisa E. Blanco, Paul P. Camacho, Jada M. Chang, Sophia G. Cornelio, Palikkun Jr. George, Jaeyun Jung, Sanghyeok Sam Lee, Laizza V. Mallari, Chealzka M. Navarro, Tricia J. Palacios, Chelsy Anne P. Reyes, Malina B. Tenorio, Maria C. Torres, and Juliana T. Vergara.

The keynote speaker for the ceremony was 2007 Alum-



Fourteen high school students were inducted into Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the National Honor Society in a ceremony held Friday, March 10, 2023, at Mount Carmel Cathedral.

Knight and Commonwealth Utilities Corp. water/wastewater engineer Nicolette Vil-

lagomez, who shared three primary lessons: To be nimble and perseverant, to live life

intentionally, and to build relationships that will last forever. "Despite my life experienc-

es and the many moments and opportunities to turn away, my faith in God, a higher power, in something much bigger than me is absolute and sound. Although a Catholic education laid the framework of my faith, my relationships with friends and family is what solidified my relationship with God. Lean on your faith and never forget you are not alone. "The opportunities from here on are endless. I encourage you, that while you work toward your goals, that you stay resilient and nimble, you achieve intentionally, you walk hand in hand with the

people that will promote your growth, and have faith in your abilities to do so. Be proud of your accomplishments. Be proud of this school. Lean on your teachers, your classmates, your parents, your fellow NHS members. Be thankful for this opportunity. Be thankful for your parent's sacrifices for your education. You are in a good place. Mount Carmel School laid the framework for me to grow, to learn, to struggle and to overcome life's challenges," Villagomez said.

In her opening remarks, Mount Carmel School president Frances Taimanao thanked parents for supporting their children and congratulated the students for their accomplishments. She also reminded the new inductees that being in the NHS goes beyond academics and prestige. "The induction into the National Honor Society is just the start. The real work begins after, where you now need to prove yourself by demonstrating the pillars of the National Honor Society. You are now leaders, role models, and ambassadors of your school community."

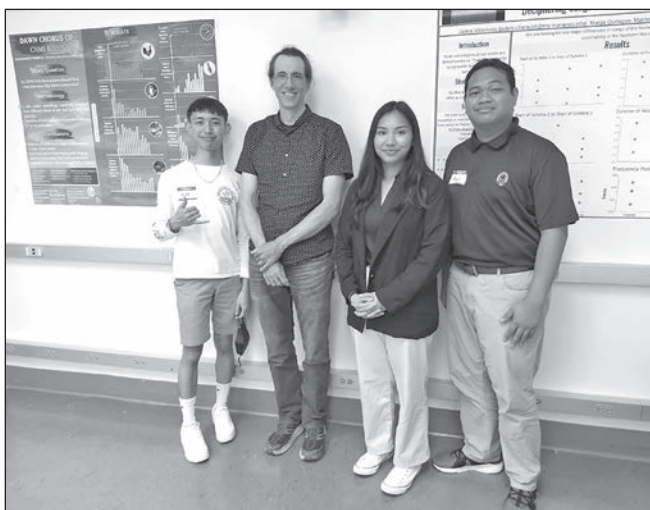
Established in 1921, the National Honor Society is the nation's premier organization that recognizes outstanding high school students, with more than one million student members who demonstrate the society's trademark values of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the NHS was opened in 1997. (MCS)

NMC students present at conservation conference in Guam

Northern Marianas College students Jaden Villacrusis, Alexander Tudela, Angel Santos, and associate professor Dr. Willson Gaul attended the Marianas Terrestrial Conservation Conference in Guam last month, giving the students an opportunity to showcase their research and learn about the various conservation efforts being carried out in Guam and the CNMI.

At the conference, held from Feb. 20 to 25, 2023, allowed Villacrusis, Tudela, and Gaul to present their research on the songs of CNMI birds. Tudela was honored with the "Best Student Poster" award for his research poster on the "Dawn Chorus of CNMI Birds."

The conference also included a field trip to the mangroves in Sasa Bay, where the students explored the diverse organisms that inhabit the



From left, Northern Marianas College student Alexander Tudela, NMC associate professor Dr. Willson Gaul, and NMC students Jaden Villacrusis and Angel Santos at the Marianas Terrestrial Conservation Conference in Guam.

area. They also visited the watershed restoration project in Inalahan, which was a moving experience for the students as they witnessed efforts to help

restore the badlands of Guam.

Villacrusis, who had many memorable experiences from the conference, said, "Interacting with different individuals al-

lowed me to make connections and open myself up to a variety of internship/learning opportunities that I was not aware of before attending the conference."

Tudela said, "I learned a lot at the conference about conservation efforts. I have a greater understanding of the CNMI's need for funding to conduct certain projects."

Santos, for his part, said, "An interesting part of the conference was hearing from various professionals and listening to their research presentations that cover both native plants and animals. It was interesting to hear the breakthrough findings of certain research projects, management efforts to combat invasive species, and species behavioral patterns."

For more information about the research presented, email Gaul at willson.gaul@marianas.edu. (NMC)

DOL looks for other options for unemployment assistance

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Labor is working on ways to create its own unemployment insurance program in order to help those who need unemployment assistance.

According to acting DOL secretary Leila Staffler, DOL will be submitting this month an application for a Technical Assistance Program grant that would allow the CNMI to participate in an unemployment insurance feasibility study.

"We're submitting a TAP grant [application] this month to see if we can get included in an unemployment insurance feasibility study," she said.

Staffler said the CNMI DOL hopes to follow in Guam's footsteps and gain access to that kind of unemployment assistance.

Guam recently received over \$880,000 through the program as part of the feasibility study.

"That will be the beginning steps that we need to take to see how we can implement an unemployment insurance program in the CNMI. That's something we want to look into," she said.

The decision to apply for the program comes with the impending end of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, which is set to expire in June 2024.

CNMI DOL has recently

notified the public that both initial applications and weekly certification forms for the PUA program will no longer be accepted by the department effective March 27, 2023.

Currently initial applications and weekly certification forms previously submitted to the department that are still unprocessed do not need to be resubmitted, unless requested by an adjudicator.

Supporting documents for existing claims will still be accepted beyond March 27, 2023.



Staffler

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

"ADDENDUM"
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP23-CHCC/IT-008A
BROADBAND SERVICES UNDER THE FCC HEALTHCARE CONNECT FUND

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 21, 2023 TIME: 5:00PM (CHST)

MODIFICATION OF BID FROM ITB TO RFP AND AMENDMENT TO THE TECHNICAL AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.HEALTH). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR, CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP23-CHCC/CGC-PMHCA-010
COMMUNITY GUIDANCE CENTER-PEDIATRICS MENTAL HEALTH CARE ACCESS PROGRAM (PMHCA)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 31st, 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"ASSESSMENT & STRATEGIC PLANNING"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.HEALTH). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR, CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 51Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Setting the record straight on Redfield, racism and the origins of COVID

I think the most upsetting thing to me was The Baltimore Sun calling me a racist because I said this came from a Wuhan lab.”

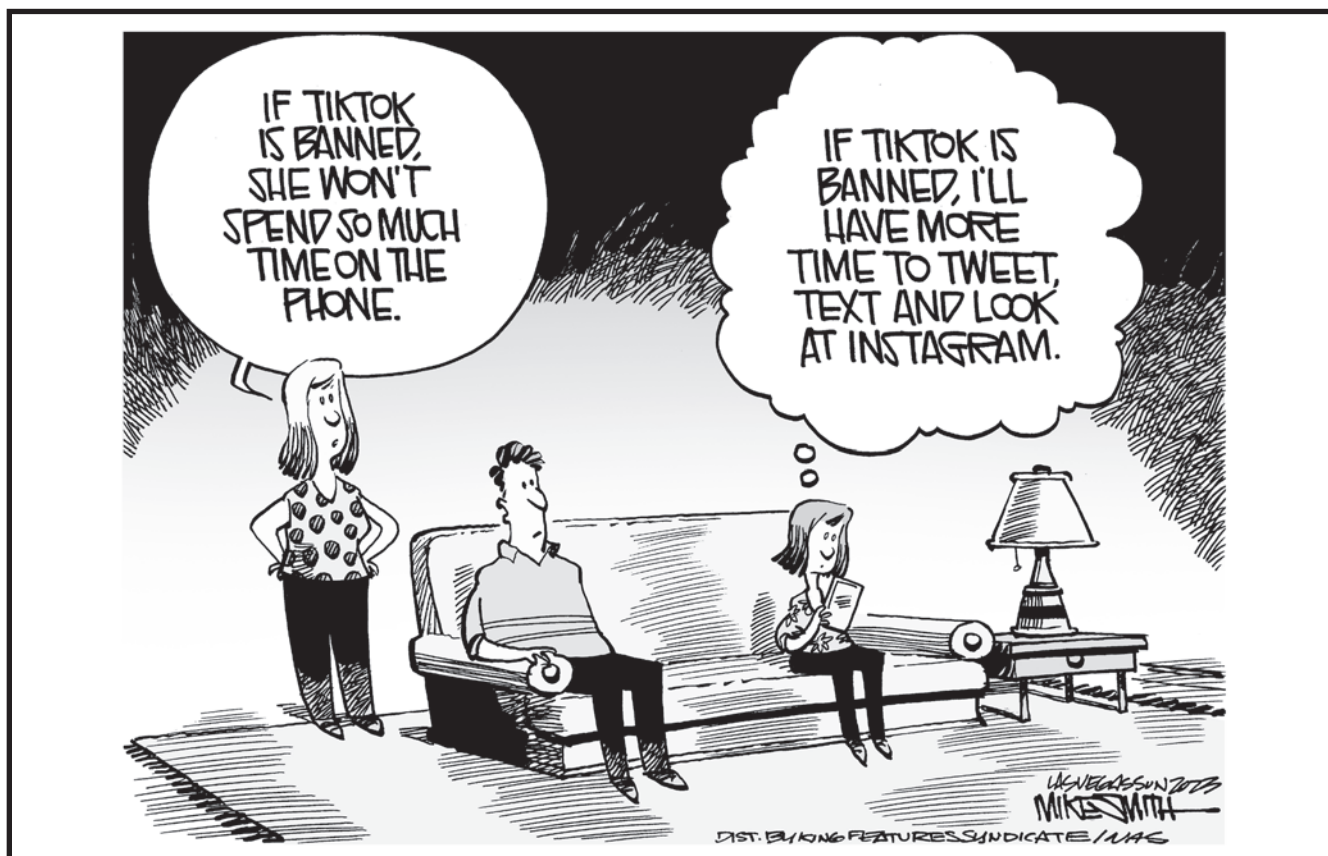
Those words came out of the mouth of Dr. Robert Redfield, the former head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, toward the end of a three-hour hearing conducted Wednesday morning by the select House subcommittee investigating the origins of the COVID-19 virus. It was in response to a question from U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio about whether scientists who espoused the theory of a Chinese lab leak, as Redfield had in a 2021 CNN interview, were branded as “crackpots” by other scientists.

When Redfield made his comments—at the height of concerns over an uptick in violence against Asian people in this country, we might add—he was no longer a federal employee, but an unpaid adviser to Gov. Larry Hogan, and Maryland officials came down on him hard. Senate President Bill Ferguson deemed Redfield’s comments “inappropriate, unacceptable and beyond unfortunate.” House of Delegates Speaker Adrienne A. Jones accused him of “spreading conspiracy theories.” State Sen. Susan Lee said Redfield was furthering a “very toxic and dangerous climate that could subject us to violence and hate crimes.” And Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot called for the state to sever ties with Redfield, saying his comments were “especially concerning and reckless as hate crimes and bigotry against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have skyrocketed over the last year.”

But it was The Sun that Redfield singled out before Congress, claiming we called him “racist.” His remark received some attention on social media and raised the question: Did The Sun actually write that?

No. But the editorial board did raise the issue of race, and how Redfield’s comments could fuel racism. In an editorial, the board pointed out the link between the rise in discrimination directed toward Asian Americans and irresponsible rhetoric blaming China for causing the pandemic, including former President Donald Trump’s insistence on calling COVID-19 the “China Virus” and “Kung Flu” (“Hogan top COVID adviser Redfield tosses viral kindling on anti-Asian fires,” March 30, 2021). And we would do it again.

Then, as now, the origins of COVID-19 were unclear, and our critique was, essentially: Why point a finger then, when you have no conclusive knowledge and it’s likely to spur more anti-Asian sentiment from those looking for reasons to hate others? From March 2020 to March 2021, when Redfield spoke, anti-Asian hate incidents, from verbal harassment to physical assault, nearly doubled. It did not help the doctor’s case that the World Health Or-

See **SETTING** on Page 9

Forget decency. In today’s politics it’s all about nastiness and party loyalty

Last weekend, the Texas Republican Party voted to punish one of its own.

Tony Gonzales, a two-term congressman from San Antonio, was censured for, among other things, backing a modest gun safety law after 19 children and two teachers were slaughtered at an elementary school in Uvalde.

The day after the party issued its condemnation, Texas Rep. Ronny Jackson appeared on Fox News (motto: “Lying to viewers for fun and profit”) where he cracked wise about the removal of a cancerous growth from President Joe Biden’s chest.

“Biden is the cancer,” the Amarillo Republican said. “He’s what needs to be removed, not the lesion they found.”

There has been no clamor among Texas Republicans to sanction Jackson for his callous and tasteless remark, and none is expected.

Together, the events—though unrelated—say a good deal about the state of our politics and, especially, the nature of the Trumpified GOP.

Forget basic human decency. What counts is pugnacity, acting out and blind, unswerving allegiance to the party line.

For years, Texas’ 23rd Congressional District—a behemoth sprawling hundreds of miles from El Paso to San Antonio—was among the most competitive in the nation.

Gonzales, a former Navy cryptologist who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, won a close race in 2020. He had an easier time of it when he sought reelection in 2022 after the lines were redrawn to give the district a somewhat more Republican tilt.

But it’s still competitive by Texas standards, and Gonzales’ performance suggests a lawmaker trying to navigate shaky political ground.

His district includes Uvalde and his vote for the gun law following the May 2022 massacre was hardly a radical response; all the legislation did was strengthen background checks, help states implement red-flag laws and boost funding for mental health and school safety. (A lead Republican negotiator was Texas’ senior U.S. senator, John Cornyn.)

If the measure came up again, Gonzales told reporters as the state GOP was weighing action against the congressman, he would double down in his support.

Another of Gonzales’ heresies was voting in favor of legislation that codified same-sex marriage. It “wasn’t a tough vote,” he told the Texas Tribune, noting the diversity of his district. “If the Republican Party is gonna grow and thrive, we gotta be open to that.”

Republicans used to call it “the Big Tent,” and everyone was said to be welcome inside.

But for extremists who have taken over leadership of the GOP in Texas and other states, the emphasis is no longer party-building. It’s purges and purity tests.

By Gonzales’ count, he’s taken nearly 1,400 votes in Congress

By **MARK Z. BARABAK**

Los Angeles Times

Mark Z. Barabak is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times, focusing on politics in California and the West.



“and the bulk of those have been with the Republican Party.” No matter.

After Saturday’s overwhelming vote to censure, the state GOP issued a statement accusing the lawmaker of a “lack of fidelity” to Republican “principles and priorities” and all but begged a challenger from his party to step in and take on Gonzales in 2024.

Never mind that someone more rigid and ideological might prevail in a primary but then very likely lose the House seat in November.

If Donald Trump and his devotees have shown one thing in the past few years, it’s that they’re not very good at winning competitive elections.

Ronny Jackson served as White House physician for five years under Presidents Obama and Trump, and it’s scary—given what he’s revealed since—that anyone let him remotely near the Democrat.

The crass quip about Biden’s cancer is the least of it.

Elected to Congress in 2020, the former naval officer has helped promote Trump’s stolen-election lie—Jackson voted against certifying Biden’s victory—suggested the spread of COVID-19 was part of a Democratic election plot, and offered groundless theories questioning the president’s mental and physical health.

None of which has hurt Jackson with voters in his overwhelmingly pro-Trump district; he won reelection in November with more than 75% support.

In Texas, “you don’t get censured for being too far right,” said Cal Jillson, an analyst and political science professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, or for taking a loud, confrontational stance in favor of guns and against gay rights.

How about making fun of the president having skin cancer?

“Our politics have descended to a level where that’s not uncommon,” Jillson noted, adding if that kind of boorish behavior drew more widespread condemnation “there would be lots of people being censured very frequently.”

Here’s a better idea. If you’d like to see more compromise and bipartisanship in Washington, vote for someone like Gonzales who shows a willingness to think independently, stand on principle and cross party lines to achieve a greater good.

And ship Jackson out to sea, where he belongs.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Jimmy Carter was right about human rights

When I first joined the U.S. State Department's Foreign Service, I was optimistic about the positive role the United States played in the world. By the time I left not quite a decade later, I was haunted by how dangerous our shortsighted foreign policy can be.

What worried me most was how casual the U.S. government was about arming, training, and resourcing dictators, tyrants and local thugs all over the world. We typically justified this in the name of stability or maintaining influence, but pursued it with shockingly little accountability for the negative consequences.

I didn't understand how we could reconcile the human rights values we claimed to champion with the human rights offenders we championed too. After I walked away from my career, I wanted to know more.

I was a history major with a law degree. I hadn't studied international relations, so on-the-job training was my foreign affairs education. Freed up from the daily rigor of diplomatic work on the front lines, I pored through books and academic articles on what drives what we do around the world.

I was shocked to learn that human rights as an element of U.S. foreign policy was barely older than I was.

President Jimmy Carter first formalized human rights in our foreign policy in 1977. Prior to that, our government didn't even pretend to factor it in. Though Carter's foreign policy will be remembered more for the disasters of the Iran hostage situation and oil crisis, it was his approach to human rights that left a truly lasting mark.

I've thought a lot about that legacy since President Carter entered hospice care. I've also thought about how much better off we would be if that legacy had gained more traction.

"Our American values are not luxuries but necessities," he said in his 1981 farewell address. "Our common vision of a free and just society is our greatest source of cohesion at home and strength abroad."

President Carter believed it was not only our duty to live up to these principles at home and overseas but that it was good policy too, serving our own interests. He understood that providing political, economic and military support to governments that abused their people might stabilize specific regimes in the short term but would ultimately foster insurgencies and violence, creating bad outcomes in the long run. Rather than creating reliable security or trade partners, it would embolden authoritarian regimes to act ever worse.

Carter sought to institutionalize human rights within our foreign policy decision-making structures, so that it would not only inform our foreign activities but constrain them as well.

Specifically, his administration implemented policies to link U.S. government decisions over foreign assistance to the human rights records of target countries. He established a Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs at the State Department, headed by an assistant secretary. The bureau today prepares human rights reports annually for every country to help inform our foreign policy decisions and human rights messaging to the world.

This marked a real shift. Throughout the Cold War, the U.S. government hadn't hesitated to partner with bad actors as long as they sided with us against the Soviet Union. Under the national security advisement of Henry Kissinger, we not only turned a blind eye to allies' violent abuses, but at times even encouraged them.

Carter offered a foreign policy that looked less awful at home and to the outside world, and Americans were ready for that change.

But that framework only took us so far. When Carter was soundly defeated and Ronald Reagan took the helm, he made quick work of undermining the institutional role of human rights. He didn't succeed entirely. When he tried to appoint a critic of the human rights bureau's very existence to head it up,

By **ELIZABETH SHACKELFORD**

Chicago Tribune

Elizabeth Shackelford is a senior fellow on U.S. foreign policy with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. She was previously a U.S. diplomat and is the author of The Dissent Channel: American Diplomacy in a Dishonest Age.



Congress rejected the nomination.

But Reagan's influence ensured our human rights approach proceeded a la carte—using it as a cudgel against adversaries when it suited us and ignoring it otherwise.

Carter's imprint on our foreign policy remains. The U.S. government must still consider the implications our foreign policy has on human rights. In practice, those concerns are routinely cast aside, but someone still asks the question.

I've been part of those discussions and have written reports to inform them, documenting human rights abuses and recommending to leaders in Washington that we cease military and financial assistance to bad actors as a result.

I took comfort in knowing that someone on the other end was reading these reports, though usually it was just a congressional staffer or mid-ranking civil servant in a State Department annex.

If human rights records had the clout that Carter intended, reports like these would have shaped our foreign policy instead, ensuring that those who foster injustice and violence would not remain beneficiaries of U.S. support. The infrastructure for that to happen is in place, just waiting for the next Jimmy Carter to revitalize it and make human rights a cornerstone of American foreign policy again.

Republicans, Fox News, lies, and spinach

Sometimes, we have to eat our vegetables, no matter how tempting a—most likely diabetic and definitely scurvy-inducing—lifetime of bonbons might be.

I know this first hand. Well, not the scurvy part. For both my pregnancies, I suffered from gestational diabetes, a wild condition where my body temporarily had high blood sugar as long as I was pregnant. I was lucky enough that I could manage it with dietary changes.

I knew that no matter what pregnancy cravings I had, my needs would always outweigh my desires. I'm not going to pretend I didn't have the rare bite of ice cream, but I mostly stuck to my nutrition plan and my kids were both born healthier because of it.

I've been thinking a lot about want versus need. My kids are toddlers now, and they want so much. All the time. They want everything at Target, and most definitely do not need everything at Target (where would we put all those bicycles?). It's my job, as a parent, to temper their wants, to steer them in the right direction, toward their needs, however distasteful they may be (see: spinach, "it's too green, mama.").

As the Dominion Voting Systems' case against Fox News has revealed, in perpetuating the "big lie" that Trump won the 2020 election, Fox News tried to give its viewers what they wanted—not what they needed—all bonbons and no spinach. The result has been a year of great ratings for them, but at what cost to the rest of us?

Dominion is putting a number on the cost to them, and it's in the billions. The cost to America in the divisions that lying caused—divisions that won't be healed any time soon—is incalculable.

Even so, most Republicans are fine with the lie. They either be-

lieve it or choose to not disbelieve it, and no lawsuit or depositions from Fox News personalities will change their minds. Tucker Carlson confessing live on air, while standing in the ashy remains of a Men's Wearhouse trouser aisle fire, would not convince a single one of them that Biden legitimately won the election.

There's science for this. A June 2022 study by Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper School of Business revealed that most people find their own politician's lies more acceptable than the other side's. Even when those lies defy gravity, reality and all available logic.

The CMU study begins with a terrifying statement: "Society recognizes that many politicians lie." It's such an obvious statement that it's easy to bypass the horror it contains. The study also reveals some people think a politician's ability to lie is a positive. No wonder things have gotten so bad.

But still, it's not exactly a bipartisan difference. There's an interesting dialectic between the right's call for personal freedoms and their desire to constrain the freedoms of others. It's paralleled by another tension in their search for truth, between their making the most falsehoods reported by the media and calling to hold the media more accountable for those falsehoods.

In Florida, the GOP is pushing a bill that would essentially challenge the Supreme Court's *New York Times v. Sullivan* case, which established the standards under which someone can sue a publication for libel. The bill would make it easier for public figures to go after the media for any falsehoods.

They'd have to start with their own if they really wanted to make a difference. In 2013, before the Trump administration and the rise of One America and other conserva-

By **ADRIANA E. RAMÍREZ**

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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tive outlets, a study by George Mason University demonstrated that Republican-skewing media lied three times more than liberal-leaning media. One can only imagine the ratio today.

If the Florida GOP's plan goes into effect, I assume the most affected organizations will be exactly the conservative-leaning media outlets who spread the "big lie."

I firmly believe that Sullivan should not be overturned. I also think that it's time that the news media be held accountable by its own. So I cheer Florida Republicans on in their desire to keep the news honest. They should look into those that bear the responsibility for spreading the most lies and defamations. They should begin with Fox News.

Why are the same people obsessed with indoctrination not realizing that they're raising their children to believe in an alternative version of reality based on a lie? Why are people who claim to believe in a good diet feeding their children bonbons? It's time for Republicans to eat their veggies.

SETTING

From Page 8

ganization had published its conclusion that the lab leak was "extremely unlikely" the same week he decided it was "most likely."

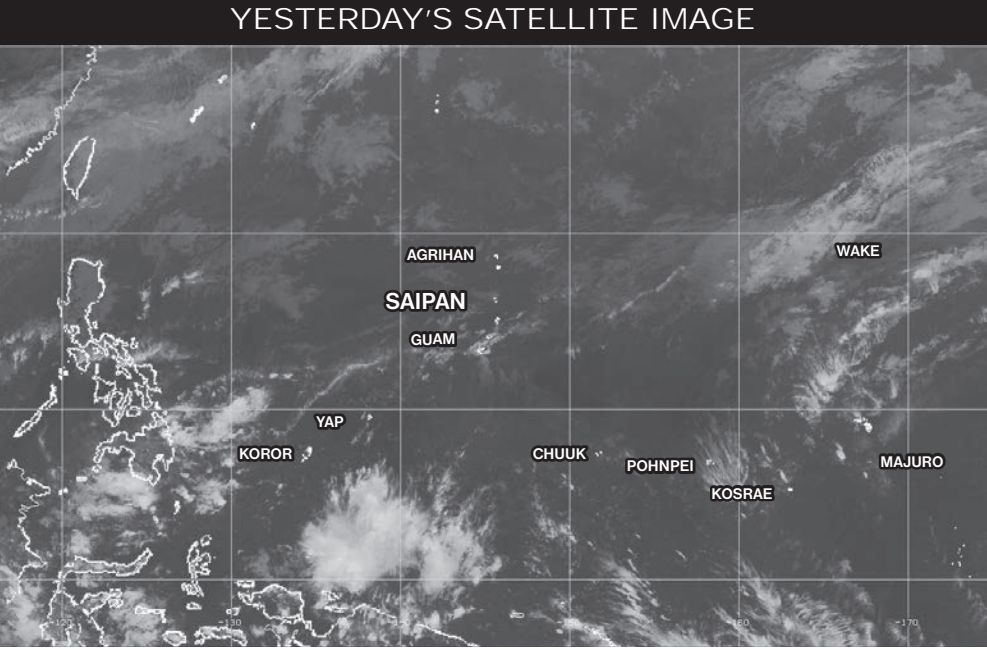
We'll give Redfield, who is now employed by the Greater Baltimore Medical Center, this: The view he expressed in March of 2021 is better supported today than it was then by ongoing

fact-gathering, although the matter is still far from settled. Redfield himself acknowledged the continuing uncertainty during the hearing, suggesting at one point that a proper investigation of the origin of COVID-19 would best be done by the intelligence community and not those assembled in the House on Wednesday. Indeed, for all the speculation advanced during the morning talkathon, the whole thing could be distilled to this: We still don't know exactly how the coronavirus originated, but we ought to find out.

In our 2021 editorial, we also asked that Redfield retract his comments. And if we erred anywhere, it's there. It's not retraction, nor censoring of scientific ideas, we want. It's responsible discussion and fact-based analysis. The political polarization of COVID-19 has led individuals to feel personally attacked by science supporting various views, which gives those in the know a greater responsibility to back up their claims and choose their words wisely. That includes us.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
Isolated showers. Partly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny	
86°	75°	87°	76°	87°	76°	87°	76°	87°	76°



PICTURE TIME: 8:54 AM, MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite this morning shows scattered showers approaching the islands of Tinian and Saipan, with isolated showers likely for Guam and Rota. The buoys reveal combined seas of 4 to 6 feet, composed mainly of an east-northeast trade-wind swell and a small north swell with wind waves mixed in.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	87° / 76°	
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	85° / 77°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	88° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	88° / 77°	
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	87° / 80°	
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	84° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:25 AM	6:26 PM
Wednesday	6:25 AM	6:27 PM
Thursday	6:24 AM	6:27 PM
Friday	6:23 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:23 AM	6:27 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	10:52 AM	-
Wednesday	12:24 AM	11:47 AM	-
Thursday	1:27 AM	12:48 PM	-
Friday	2:29 AM	1:53 PM	-
Saturday	3:27 AM	2:58 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Sunny	71° / 56°	
Beijing	Mostly Sunny/Wind	69° / 34°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	71° / 66°	
Honolulu	Mostly Cloudy	83° / 72°	
London	Cloudy	49° / 40°	
Los Angeles	Cloudy	64° / 55°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	89° / 73°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	67° / 53°	
Miami	Mostly Sunny	81° / 76°	
New York	Rain	46° / 34°	
Osaka	Sunny	61° / 42°	
Paris	Showers	49° / 36°	
Busan	Sunny	59° / 50°	
Rome	Showers/Wind	60° / 48°	
Salem	Showers	70° / 61°	
San Francisco	Showers	61° / 54°	
Seoul	Sunny	59° / 42°	
Tokyo	Cloudy	56° / 43°	
Washington, DC	Showers	56° / 43°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
12:49 AM	High Tide	1.50	
5:55 AM	Low Tide	1.10	
11:14 AM	High Tide	1.68	
6:55 PM	Low Tide	-0.07	

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW9308	3:50AM	7:20AM	4, 7	TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW9307	9:20PM	2:50AM+1	3, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 6, 2023

SAIPAN TO TINIAN			TINIAN TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:20 A.M.	11:38 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	12:00 P.M.	12:18 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:40 P.M.	3:58 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	4:20 P.M.	4:38 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:40 A.M.	9:58 A.M.	6,7	10:20 A.M.	10:38 A.M.	6,7
SAIPAN TO ROTA			ROTA TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:20 A.M.	8:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10:20 A.M.	11:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:00 P.M.	5:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	6:00 P.M.	6:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:40 A.M.	8:20 A.M.	6,7	8:40 A.M.	9:20 A.M.	6,7
3:00 P.M.	3:40 P.M.	6,7	4:00 P.M.	4:40 P.M.	6,7
SAIPAN TO GUAM			GUAM TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	1:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1:30 P.M.	2:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2:00 P.M.	3:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5:30 P.M.	6:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:00 P.M.	8:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9:00 P.M.	10:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
11:00 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	6,7	12:30 P.M.	1:30 P.M.	6,7
5:00 P.M.	6:00 P.M.	6,7	6:30 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	6,7
ROTA TO GUAM			GUAM TO ROTA		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:20 A.M.	8:55 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9:25 A.M.	10:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:25 P.M.	5:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3:30 P.M.	4:05 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily	3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun	3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily	3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

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Business

Black 8 Pool Bar opens in the heart of Garapan



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Top 8 Pool Bar is expected to join Saipan Billiards Association and Saipan Electronic Darts Association this coming season.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down his tourist company, Ken Chen turned to his passion and opened a billiards establishment.

Thus was born Black 8 Pool Bar on Oct. 15, 2022 and with weekly 8-ball and electronic darts tournaments making him busy, he couldn't be happier.

"I'm a pool player too and this is trending and I love sports, having played for four years already. I wanna try a bar business too," he said.

Black 8 Pool Bar, which is located in the heart of the tourist district of Garapan, has two billiards tables and two electronic dart boards.

"To all pool and dart players every Friday and Saturday we have tournaments come and join and visit us," said Chen, who used to run L.T. Travel Co. Ltd.

As for the name, he said he chose Black 8 Pool Bar because 8 is very lucky for him.

"The number 8 is lucky for



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Black 8 Pool Bar has two billiards tables and two electronic dart boards.

me and I hope my bar business will become successful so that I can hire and help other people here on Saipan."

Top 8 Pool Bar is also expected to join Saipan Billiards Association and Saipan Electronic Darts Association this coming season.

It also offers the full bar experience with drinks galore

like cocktail shots, beer, and any type of drinks—alcoholic or otherwise—and has a private room that can seat 20 people.

"We have free WiFi, free karaoke, and our beer has the lowest price on Saipan. Billiards and darts players also feel comfortable playing here because we are air-condi-

tioned," said Chen.

Aside from hosting billiards and electronic darts tournaments, Black 8 Pool Bar is also open for private parties for all occasions.

"Those having parties can order from other restaurants and they can bring the food here while playing billiards and darts. We accept all types of party occasions and they can bring their own food, but buy their drinks from us," he said.

Chen said despite the fate of his two companies due to the pandemic, he's optimistic Black 8 Pool Bar will be able to succeed.

"I was super affected by COVID-19 and my business before was a tourist company and car rental. Now I hope this sports bar business will be more successful as this is also what I like to do," he said.

Black 8 Pool Bar is located on the second floor of New Mirage Spa next to Hanamitsu Spa at the Paseo De Marianas in Garapan. It is open everyday from 5pm to 2am (with happy hour up to 8pm). For more information, call (670) 287-0607.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Black 8 Pool Bar is located on the second floor of New Mirage Spa next to Hanamitsu Spa at the Paseo De Marianas in Garapan.

US turns to new ways to punish Russian oligarchs for the war

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. has begun an aggressive new push to inflict pain on Russia's economy and specifically its oligarchs with the intent of thwarting the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine.

From the Treasury Department to the Justice Department, U.S. officials will focus on efforts to legally liquidate the property of Russian oligarchs, expand financial penalties on those who facilitate the evasion of sanctions, and close loopholes in the law that allow oligarchs to use shell companies to move through the U.S. financial system.

Andrew Adams, who heads the KleptoCapture task force, designed to enforce the economic restrictions within the U.S. imposed on Russia and its billionaires, told The Associated Press that the group is prioritizing its efforts to identify those who help Russians evade sanctions and violate export controls.

"These illicit procurement networks will continue to take up an ever-increasing amount of our bandwidth," said Adams, who also serves as acting deputy assistant attorney general.

So far, more than \$58 billion worth of sanctioned Russians' assets have been blocked or frozen worldwide, according to a report last week from the Treasury Department. That includes two luxury yachts each worth \$300 million in San Diego and Fiji, and six New York and Florida properties worth \$75 million owned by sanctioned oligarch Viktor Vekselberg.

The U.S. has begun attempts to punish the associates and wealth managers of oligarchs — in Vekselberg's case, a federal court in New York indicted Vladimir Voronchenko after he helped maintain Vekselberg's properties. He was charged in February with conspiring to violate and evade U.S. sanctions.

US government moves to stop potential banking crisis

NEW YORK (AP)—The U.S. government took extraordinary steps Sunday to stop a potential banking crisis after the historic failure of Silicon Valley Bank, assuring all depositors at the failed institution that they could access all their money quickly, even as another major bank was shut down.

The announcement came amid fears that the factors that caused the Santa Clara, California-based bank to fail could spread. Regulators had worked

all weekend to try to find a buyer for the bank, which was the second-largest bank failure in history. Those efforts appeared to have failed Sunday.

In a sign of how fast the financial bleeding was occurring, regulators announced that New York-based Signature Bank had also failed and was being seized on Sunday. At more than \$110 billion in assets, Signature Bank is the third-largest bank failure in U.S. history.

The near-financial crisis

that U.S. regulators had to intervene to prevent left Asian markets jittery as trading began Monday. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 sank 1.6% in morning trading, Australia's S&P/ASX 200 lost 0.3% and South Korea's Kospi shed 0.4%. But Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 1.4% and the Shanghai Composite increased 0.3%.

In an effort to shore up confidence in the banking system, the Treasury Department, Federal Reserve and FDIC said Sunday that all Silicon Valley

Bank clients would be protected and able to access their money. They also announced steps that are intended to protect the bank's customers and prevent additional bank runs.

"This step will ensure that the U.S. banking system continues to perform its vital roles of protecting deposits and providing access to credit to households and businesses in a manner that promotes strong and sustainable economic growth," the agencies said in a joint statement.

Nation

Sister grieves for American killed in Mexico kidnapping

LAKE CITY, S.C. (AP)—Prepping for his first trip out of the country, 28-year-old Zindell Brown of Lake City, South Carolina, had something more than nerves. Perhaps it was a premonition about the trip he and several friends were taking to Mexico.

“He said, ‘Something, it just doesn’t feel right,’” his older sister Zalandria Brown told The Associated Press over the phone. “(That was) the last thing we talked about.”

Hopping into protection mode for the man so close to her that she called him her “hip bone,” Brown urged her brother to not take the trip planned earlier this month. As someone known to help others, however, Brown wasn’t surprised her sibling shook off the feeling and offered to drive with his group of childhood friends on a road trip to Mexico, where one was scheduled for cosmetic surgery and another planned to celebrate his 34th birthday.

The inside of a rented white van would be the last place Brown would see her baby brother alive. Sometime during the nearly 22-hour trip from South Carolina to Brownsville, Texas, Brown

watched a video posted online of Zindell smiling into the camera.

But in Mexico, the group was attacked. Around midday, a vehicle crashed into the group’s van. Several men with tactical vests and assault rifles arrived in another vehicle and surrounded them, according to Mexican police reports.

Two members of the group — Zindell Brown and Shaeed Woodard — were shot and killed. Eric Williams was shot in the leg, and he and fellow survivor Latavia McGee were loaded into a pickup truck, according to video posted on social media. The violence was blamed on the Gulf cartel, a drug gang tied to killings and kidnappings in Matamoros, a city of a half-million people that has long been a stronghold of the powerful cartel. The group purportedly apologized for the killings in a letter obtained by the Associated Press from a Mexican law enforcement official.

Even before she viewed footage of the ambush that quickly circulated online, Zalandria Brown said she began to have a sickening feeling that her brother was gone.



Elder Sharon Hammond uses a tissue during a vigil for a group of Americans recently kidnapped in Mexico, at Word of God Ministries in Scranton, S.C., Wednesday, March 8, 2023.

“That was the other part of my soul,” she said.

She called her brother the male version of herself. Gone is her game hunting partner and the “cool uncle” her two (teenage) sons looked up to.

“He always put a smile on everybody’s face. He was always joking and playing and laughing around,” she said.

In the days leading up to the trip, Zindell spent time at

home, playing video games — a break from the other work his hands were known for: carpentry. Zindell picked up woodworking skills from his father, who wanted to train him in the family craft.

“He had so many skills. He could do carpentry work,” she said, adding: “He did roofing work. He could do everything you could think of when it came to building a

house. My father trained him to do all of that.”

Though she lives in Florence, South Carolina, Brown said she, her brother, Woodard and McGee all grew up in modest Lake City. By midweek, the town of fewer than 6,000 people seemed consumed by the grim loss.

At the local library on Main Street, patrons chatted amongst themselves

about condolences, while a few blocks away near the police station a stranger pressed a bouquet of purple flowers into the arms of Shaeed’s father.

This month would have marked Shaeed Woodard’s 34th birthday, according to his father, James Woodard. Shaeed’s cousin Latavia McGee had surprised him with the road trip as a birthday excursion, James Woodard said. Shaeed and Zindell were close; Brown said she also considered him a brother.

By the night of March 5, Brown would get a phone call confirming her worst fears. A family friend phoned to say the doctor’s office they were headed to in Mexico called to say McGee was late and thought to be kidnapped. McGee said every day since then for her surviving two siblings and parents has seemed like a “nightmare.” Neither family said they accept the cartel’s apology for the violent abductions. “It’s just crazy to see your own child taken from you in such a way, in a violent way like that,” Woodard said. “He didn’t deserve it because he was a sweetheart. He had a big heart.”

Cohen to testify before grand jury in Trump hush-money probe

NEW YORK (AP)—Donald Trump’s former lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen is poised to testify Monday before a Manhattan grand jury investigating hush-money payments he arranged and made on the former president’s behalf.

Cohen’s impending grand jury appearance was confirmed by two people familiar with the matter who were not authorized to speak publicly about grand jury proceedings and did so on condition of anonymity.

Cohen’s closed-door testimony is coming at a critical time as the Manhattan district attorney’s office closes in on a decision on whether to seek charges against Trump.

A Trump loyalist turned adversary, Cohen is likely to provide critical details about whatever involvement the Republican presidential candidate may have had in the payments, made in the final weeks of the 2016 campaign, to two women who alleged affairs with him.

Cohen has given prosecutors evidence, including voice recordings of conversations he had with a lawyer for one of the women, as well as emails and text messages. He also has recordings of a conversation

in which he and Trump spoke about an arrangement to pay the other woman through the supermarket tabloid the National Enquirer.

Prosecutors appear to be looking at whether Trump committed crimes in how the payments were made or how they were accounted for internally at Trump’s company, the Trump Organization.

One possible charge would be falsifying business records, a misdemeanor unless prosecutors could prove it was done to conceal another crime. No former U.S. president has ever been charged with a crime.

Trump has denied the affairs and has said he did nothing wrong. Prosecutors have invited him to testify before the grand jury, and he has the right to testify under New York law. However, legal experts say he is unlikely to do so because it wouldn’t benefit his defense and he’d have to give up a cloak of immunity that’s automatically granted to grand jury witnesses under state law.

Cohen served prison time after pleading guilty in 2018 to federal charges, including campaign finance violations, for arranging the payouts to porn actor Stormy Daniels and model Karen McDougal to

keep them from going public. He has also been disbarred.

Trump’s lawyers could point to those factors in an attempt to undermine Cohen’s credibility, if the former president is charged and Cohen ends up testifying at trial.

Cohen has been meeting regularly with Manhattan prosecutors in recent weeks, including a daylong session Friday to prepare for his grand jury appearance.

The panel has been hearing evidence since January in what Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg has called the “next chapter” of his office’s yearslong Trump investigation. But the hush-money payments—perhaps the most salacious of the avenues of inquiry into Trump—are well-trodded ground.

Federal prosecutors and Bragg’s predecessor in the D.A.’s office, Cyrus Vance Jr., each scrutinized the payments but didn’t charge Trump.

Cohen declined to comment to reporters as he left the meeting, saying he’d be “taking a little bit of time now to stay silent and allow the D.A. build their case.”

The Manhattan district attorney’s office also declined to comment.

Trump continued to lash out at the probe on social media Friday, calling the case a “Scam, Injustice, Mockery,

and Complete and Total Weaponization of Law Enforcement in order to affect a Presidential Election!”

8 dead after smuggling boats capsize off San Diego coast

SAN DIEGO (AP)—At least eight people were killed when two migrant smuggling boats capsized in shallow but treacherous surf amid heavy fog, authorities said Sunday, marking one of the deadliest maritime human smuggling operations ever off of U.S. shores.

A Spanish-speaking woman on one of the panga-style boats called 911 Saturday night to report the other vessel overturned in waves at Black’s Beach, authorities said. She said there were 15 people on the capsized vessel and eight on hers.

Coast Guard and San Diego Fire-Rescue crews pulled bodies of eight adults from the water, but fog hampered the search for additional victims. Recovery efforts resumed Sunday but no additional bodies were found.

Survivors may have escaped on land, including the woman who called 911. Authorities did not know her whereabouts.

San Diego Lifeguard Chief James Gartland said rescuers

found the two boats overturned in shallow waters when they arrived. Surf was modest, with swells around 3 feet (1 meter), but skies were foggy and black.

“That area is very hazardous, even in the daytime,” Gartland said at a news conference. “It has a series of sandbars and in-shore rip currents, so you can think that you can land in some sand or get to waist-high, knee-high water and think that you’re able to be safe to exit the water, but there’s long, in-shore holes. If you step into those holes, those rip currents will pull you along the shore and back out to sea.”

Black’s Beach is about 15 miles (24 kilometers) north of downtown San Diego in a secluded area not far from the popular La Jolla Shores. Its reputation for some of the best breaks in Southern California draws many surfers.

Hundreds of maritime smuggling operations occur every year off California’s coast and sometimes turn fatal. In May 2021, a packed boat carrying

migrants capsized and broke apart in powerful surf along the rocky San Diego coast, killing three people and injuring more than two dozen others.

Smuggling off the California coast has ebbed and flowed over the years but has long been a risky alternative for migrants to avoid heavily guarded land borders. Pangas enter from Mexico in the dead of night, sometimes charting hundreds of miles north. Recreational boats try to mix in unnoticed with fishing and pleasure vessels during the day.

South of the U.S. border, there are many secluded, private beaches with gated entrances between high-rises with magnificent ocean views, some only partially built because funds dried up during construction. Popotla, a fishing hamlet where narrow streets are lined with vendors selling a wide variety of local catch, is favored among smugglers for its large, sandy beach and relatively gentle waves.

Asia

US, S. Korea hold drills as North Korea launches missiles from sub

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The South Korean and U.S. militaries launched their biggest joint military exercises in years Monday, as North Korea said it tested submarine-launched cruise missiles in an apparent protest of the drills it views as an invasion rehearsal.

North Korea's launches Sunday signal the country likely will conduct provocative weapons testing activities during the U.S.-South Korean drills that are to run for 11 days. Last week, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered his troops to be ready to repel its rivals' "frantic war preparation moves."

The South Korean-U.S. drills include a computer simulation called the Freedom Shield 23 and several combined field training exercises, collectively known as the Warrior Shield FTX.

The South Korean and U.S. militaries said earlier that the computer simulation is designed to strengthen the allies' defense and response capabilities amid North Korea's increasing nuclear threats and other changing security environments. They said the field exercises would also return to the scale of their earlier largest field training called Foal Eagle that was last held in 2018.

A recent U.S. military statement said the field exercises

are to further enhance the two militaries' "cooperation through air, land, sea, space, cyber and special operations, and improve upon tactics, techniques and procedures."

North Korea said in state media that its launches of two cruise missiles from a submarine off its east coast showed its resolve to respond with "overwhelming powerful" force to the intensifying military maneuvers by the "the U.S. imperialists and the South Korean puppet forces."

The North's official Korean Central News Agency called the missiles "strategic" weapons and said their launches verified the operation posture of the country's "nuclear war deterrence." This implies that North Korea intends to arm the cruise missiles with nuclear warheads.

It said the missiles flew for more than two hours, drawing figure-eight-shaped patterns and demonstrating an ability to hit targets 1,500 kilometers (930 miles) away. The missiles were fired from the 8.24 Yongung ship, KCNA said, referencing a submarine that North Korea used to conduct its first submarine-launched ballistic missile test in 2016.

The reported launch details show Japan, including U.S. military bases in Okinawa, is within striking distance of the cruise missiles, if they are

fired from the North's eastern waters, said Kim Dong-yub, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul. He added the weapons could reach even the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam if a North Korean submarine can operate further from its shore.

Sunday's actions were the North's first underwater missile launches since it test-fired a weapon from a silo under an inland reservoir last October. Last May, the country test-launched a short-range ballistic missile from the 8.24 Yongung submarine.

North Korea's command of submarine-launched missile systems would make it harder for adversaries to detect launches in advance and would provide the North with retaliatory attack capability. Experts say it would take years, extensive resources and major technological improvements for the heavily sanctioned nation to build a fleet of several submarines that could travel quietly in seas and reliably execute strikes.

Sunday's tests were the North's first known launches of cruise missiles from a submarine as its previous underwater launches all involved ballistic missiles. It's also the first time for North Korea to fire multiple missiles from a submarine on a single launch event, observers say.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Masks stay put in Japan as 3-year request to wear them ends

TOKYO (AP)—Japan on Monday dropped its request for people to wear masks after three years, but hardly anything changed in the country that has had an extremely high regard for their effectiveness at anti-virus protection. Most commuters exiting Tokyo's main train station in the morning were wearing masks as they headed to work. So were people on the streets. During a televised budget committee meeting at parliament, some lawmakers still wore masks, though Prime Minister Fumio Kishida wasn't wearing one when he arrived at his office Monday. Baseball fans who gathered outside of the Tokyo Dome hours before Monday's games Australia-Czech Republic and China-South Korea also had on masks. They'll also be able to cheer without their masks as that ban was lifted, too. Drop-

ping the mask-wearing request is one of the last steps Japan's government is taking in easing COVID-19 rules in public places as it tries to expand business and other activity. "From today, mask wearing is left up to individual judgment. We are not forcing anyone to wear it or take it off," Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters as he arrived at his office. "I think there will be more occasions when I will take my mask off."

Malaysian ex-PM Muhyiddin hit with seventh graft charge

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Former Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin pleaded innocent Monday to a seventh corruption charge, this one alleging he received illegal proceeds of 5 million ringgit (\$1.1 million) that was banked into his political party. Muhyiddin is Malaysia's second leader to be indicted after leaving office

and has denied wrongdoing. He slammed the case as "organized political persecution" to embarrass him and crush his Islamic-dominated opposition ahead of state elections. He denied abusing his power to award contracts to selected ethnic Malay contractors in return for bribes, and to approve an appeal by a business tycoon on the cancellation of his tax exemption. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim rejected accusations that the charges were politically motivated. The anti-graft agency and the attorney-general's chambers, whose chiefs were previously appointed by Muhyiddin, have denied there was political interference in the investigation and prosecution process. On Friday, Muhyiddin pleaded innocent to four charges of abusing his power to obtain 232.5 million ringgit (\$51.4 million) bribes for his party and two charges of money laundering involving 195 million ringgit (\$43 million).

World

'Russian advance stalls in Ukraine's Bakhmut'



Ukrainian self propelled howitzer 2s1 of 80 Air Assault brigade fires towards Russian forces at the frontline near Bakhmut, Ukraine, Friday, March 10, 2023.

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Russia's advance seems to have stalled in Moscow's campaign to capture the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, a leading think tank said in an assessment of the longest ground battle of the war.

The Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said there were no confirmed advances by Russian forces in Bakhmut. Russian forces and units from the Kremlin-controlled paramilitary Wagner Group continued to launch ground attacks in the city, but there was no evidence that they were able to make any progress, the ISW said.

The founder of the Wagner Group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, said Sunday on the Telegram messaging app that the situation in Bakhmut was "difficult, very difficult,

with the enemy fighting for each meter."

The ISW report issued Saturday cited the spokesperson of the Ukrainian Armed Forces' Eastern Group, Serhii Cherevaty, who said that fighting in the Bakhmut area had been more intense this week than the previous one. According to Cherevaty, there were 23 clashes in the city over the previous 24 hours.

The ISW's report comes following claims of Russian progress earlier this week. The U.K. Defense Ministry said Saturday that paramilitary units from the Kremlin-controlled Wagner Group had seized most of eastern Bakhmut, with a river flowing through the city now marking the front line of the fighting. The assessment highlighted that Russia's assault will be difficult to sustain

without more significant personnel losses.

The mining city of Bakhmut is located in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk province, one of four regions of Ukraine that Russian President Vladimir Putin illegally annexed last year. Russia's military opened the campaign to take control of Bakhmut in August, and both sides have experienced staggering casualties. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has vowed not to retreat.

In its latest report, the U.K. Defense Ministry said Sunday that the impact of heavy Russian military casualties in Ukraine varies dramatically across Russia. The British military's intelligence update said Moscow and St. Petersburg remained "relatively unscathed," particularly among members of Russia's elite.

Jehovah's Witnesses shocked by Hamburg attack

BERLIN (AP)—The Jehovah's Witnesses expressed shock Saturday over the deadly shooting at one of the group's halls in Hamburg, Germany, but thanked German authorities for preventing more bloodshed through their swift intervention during the attack.

A gunman shot dead six members of the Hamburg congregation and wounded eight others, including a woman who lost her unborn child, before killing himself late Thursday. The shooting drew widespread condemnation and calls for a tightening of Germany's firearms laws.

In a statement, the Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany confirmed that the man police identified as the gunman was a former member who left the church voluntarily two years ago.

"We do not know the motive for this terrible crime," it said.

"Like the rest of the world, we were shocked and bewildered when we read (...) that the gunman reportedly bore 'particular anger' not just toward the Jehovah's Witnesses but also toward other religious groups and his former employer."

Officials identified the shooter only as 35-year-old Philipp F., in line with German privacy laws, and said that his departure from the church was "apparently not on good terms." The investigation into his motives was ongoing.

A website registered in the man's name stated that he grew up in "a strict religious evangelical household" the Bavaria state town of Kempten.

Police said Philipp F. had only legally acquired a gun in December and was visited by officers two months later after an anonymous tip suggested that he might be psychologically unfit to own the

weapon and was angry at the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Officers found the man to be cooperative and decided there were no grounds to take away his weapon, police said.

In its statement, The Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany expressed its deep sympathy for the families of the victims and the survivors, and said its focus was on providing pastoral care to everyone affected by the tragedy.

"At the same time, our sincere thanks go to the police, who undoubtedly prevented even more deaths and injuries due to their quick intervention," it said.

The Hamburg congregation that was holding a service when the attack happened currently has about 60 members and is one of 47 in the port city, which is home to almost 4,000 denomination members, according to the statement.

Overdrive

Mazda CX-90 goes upscale with silky inline-6 engine

By HENRY PAYNE
The Detroit News

Premium electric vehicles are all the rage these days as manufacturers rush to duplicate Tesla's sales success as well as meet stringent government regulations. Audi, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Kia, Hyundai, Volkswagen, Genesis and others have introduced new, upscale EVs.

But Mazda has never been one to go with the flow.

Taking a page out of BMW's book, the Zoom Zoom brand is upgrading its three-row Mazda SUV with a rear-wheel-drive-based, silky-smooth, turbocharged, inline-6 engine. The CX-90 expands on Mazda's successful, turbo-4-powered CX-9 formula by adding extra width, length, features and two more cylinders. The result is a stylish three-row ute that is \$25,000 less than a similarly-proportioned, inline-6-powered BMW X7 X-Drive while delivering similar performance dynamics.

In upper S trims beginning at \$53,125, the Mazda's 340-horsepower, inline-6 cylinder (the \$78,845 BMW X7 makes 375 horses) offering is the headliner as the brand seeks to take its brand upscale with a new flagship. Also on offer is an entry-level, \$40,970, 280-horse version of the turbo-6 plus Mazda's first plug-in offering starting at \$54,295.

Family SUVs demand gas engines for long road trips, yet the CX-90 is still "electri-



MAZDA/TNS
The 2024 Mazda CX-90 comes with three electrified engine options.

fied"—to use that hip term—as the inline-6 offerings are paired with a 48-volt battery. The so-called mild-hybrid system—placed between the engine and transmission—complements the inline-6's smooth power delivery while adding efficiency and helping power a cabin-full of electronic content. To optimize the new engine's 369 pound-feet of torque for better grip and acceleration, all CX-90 models come standard with i-Activ all-wheel drive.

The CX-9 starts at a similar \$40k, but does not have the range of models like the CX-90. The CX-9 comes with one powertrain and five trim levels, while the CX-90 has three engine options and 11 trim options—the top S Premium

Plus model topping out above \$60,000. It even expands on the CX-9's six-passenger capacity with room for eight.

"CX-90 offers powerful and responsive performance, alluring design and intuitive technology," said Mazda CEO of North American Operations Jeff Guyton. "We think this is a breakthrough vehicle in its segment."

Mazda has also dabbled in EVs with the compact MX-30 SUV. But that vehicle offers just 100 miles of range and is only sold in California to help the brand meet emissions standards. The striking CX-90, on the other hand, is a statement that smooth, powerful inline-6 engines are not just the exclusive domain of

German luxury cars.

Where elite luxury is synonymous with a la carte technology packages, the CX-90 maintains Mazda's mass-market appeal with a laundry list of standard features including automatic braking, blind-spot assist and adaptive cruise control.

The CX-9, introduced in 2007, has gained a reputation as one of the best-handling three-row SUVs on the market, but the CX-90 is a more ambitious vehicle. Its nomenclature follows that of the mid-size Mazda CX-50, which brought more rugged looks and suspension to Mazda's best-selling CX-5 crossover. But the CX-90 goes beyond cosmetic tweaks to the CX-9 by introducing an all-new large platform that adopts a lon-

gitudinal (not transverse) engine layout to increase rear-drive-based performance.

That CX-90 upgrade also reaches into the iconic MX-5 Miata sports car's bag of tricks, using so-called Kinematic Posture Control to suppress body lift on tight corners while allowing occupants to maintain a natural posture. Also benefiting from the brand's sports car DNA, the big CX-90 increases chassis rigidity for better maneuverability.

From the entry-level Mazda3 Turbo to the CX-50, the brand's lineup has benefited from an optional, high-torque, 2.5-liter, 250-horsepower inline, turbocharged 4-cylinder mated to a silky 6-speed automatic transmission. The CX-90 flagship

takes that know-how and applies it to the turbocharged inline-6 drivetrain mated to a new eight-speed gearbox.

The 3.3-liter six-cylinder boasts the highest horsepower and torque output of any mass production gas mill developed by Mazda.

While the CX-50 complements the CX-5, the CX-90 feels like it will ultimately replace the CX-9. The CX-90 eschews the CX-50's off-road-inspired body cladding and maintains its CX-9 sibling's elegant, spare design. Also introduced with CX-90 is a new Artisan Red paint option.

The simple elegance continues inside where the Mazda is trimmed with premium materials like Napa leather, wood and stitched fabrics. The horizontal cabin design gains a bigger, remote-dial-controlled, 12.3-inch dashboard display. Technology upgrades include a "see-through-view" monitor to help with parking and third-row USB-C charging ports. The Mazda can tow 5,000 pounds, which is in line with a class that includes the Kia Telluride and Ford Explorer.

In introducing its first plug-in hybrid model, the Mazda falls back on the familiar hybrid formula (used by other automakers from Ford to Honda to Toyota) of a 2.5-liter four-banger married to an electric motor and 17.8 kWh battery. Unlike other hybrid applications, the Mazda plug-in uses the same eight-speed automatic transmission that powers its gas engines.

How to turn off automatic brake?

Q : I have a Jeep Cherokee that has an annoying issue. The electronic parking brake is set to automatically engage if the car is running, even in neutral, and the driver's side door is opened. This is a problem when going through an automated car wash and the attendant opens the driver's side door to dry the door frame. The brake will engage while I am still on the car wash track, and I have to hurry to disable the park brake, which requires me to press the brake pedal. I have checked the owner's manual for my vehicle and cannot find a way to disable the auto park brake feature. Is this something that cannot be disabled, or am I missing something?

J.G., Eden Prairie, Minnesota

A: Your Jeep has a feature called SafeHold. Dig into your owner's manual and you will find that the parking brake "will engage automatically if the vehicle is left unsecured. If the automatic transmission is not in PARK, the seat belt is unbuckled, the driver door is open, the vehicle is at a standstill, and there is no attempt to depress the brake pedal or accelerator pedal, the park brake will automatically engage to prevent the vehicle from rolling. The manual also states that "SafeHold can be temporarily bypassed by pushing the Electric Park Brake Switch while the driver door is open and brake pedal is pressed. Once manually bypassed, SafeHold will be enabled again once the vehicle reaches 12 mph (20 km/h) or the ignition is cycled to the OFF position and back to ON again."

■ ■ ■

Q: I need to replace the battery in my BMW and I have been told that it can only be done at a BMW dealership. Is this true? What if I live in Austin, Nevada, and my battery dies but the

only place to replace it is either in Las Vegas (5 hours) or Reno (3 hours)? I have been told that this is due to the reprogramming of the computer. My AAA Service Center has told me this along with some friends who own a Mini Cooper and a Mercedes-Benz. The car right now has an aftermarket battery and worked fine. I bought this car used five years ago from a BMW dealer and this is the battery that was installed at the time.

D.C., Henderson, Nevada

A: There's some very sophisticated technology in these cars and it requires that the replacement battery be registered to the vehicle. If it isn't done, the computer may assume that the old battery is still in the vehicle. And if computer memories are not kept alive, functions such as power window operation may be lost.

■ ■ ■

Q: I live in the Chicago area and prefer to drive a sedan rather than an SUV. However, I have concerns about winter driving but have been told that placing a good set of winter tires on my car during the winter months would alleviate those concerns and could be just as effective when driving my 2019 Honda Accord around town. I am retired so I usually drive fewer than 8,000 miles per year. Your opinion?

W.T., Chicago

A: Winter tires are a great idea for your sedan. I suggest putting them on both the front and rear, not only the drive wheels. You may switch back to summer tires or all-season tires if you wish when the weather improves.

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. Weber's work has appeared in professional trade magazines and

MOTORMOUTH

BY BOB WEBER
Tribune News Service



Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. Weber's work has appeared in professional trade magazines and various consumer publications including Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.

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ASAWIN KANAKASAI/DREAMSTIME/TNS

"SafeHold can be temporarily bypassed by pushing the Electric Park Brake Switch while the driver door is open and brake pedal is pressed."

Life & Style

‘Everything’ wins best picture, is everywhere at Oscars



CHRIS PIZZELLO/AP

Michelle Yeoh accepts the award for best performance by an actress in a leading role for “Everything Everywhere All at Once” at the Oscars on Sunday, March 12, 2023, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.



JORDAN STRAUSS/AP

Brendan Fraser poses with the award for best performance by an actor in a leading role for “The Whale” in the press room at the Oscars on Sunday, March 12, 2023, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.



AP PHOTO/CHRIS PIZZELLO

Jamie Lee Curtis accepts the award for best performance by an actress in a supporting role for “Everything Everywhere All at Once” at the Oscars on Sunday, March 12, 2023, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.



JORDAN STRAUSS/AP

Ke Huy Quan, winner of the award for best performance by an actor in a supporting role for “Everything Everywhere All at Once” poses in the press room at the Oscars on Sunday, March 12, 2023, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The metaphysical multiverse comedy “Everything Everywhere All at Once” wrapped its hot dog fingers around Hollywood’s top prize Sunday, winning best picture at the 95th Academy Awards, along with awards for Michelle Yeoh, Ke Huy Quan and Jamie Lee Curtis.

Though worlds away from Oscar bait, Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert’s anarchic ballet of everything bagels, googly-eyed rocks and one messy tax audit emerged as an improbable Academy Awards heavyweight. The indie hit, A24’s second best picture winner following “Moonlight,” won seven Oscars in all. Only two other films in Oscar history—“A Streetcar Named Desire” and “Network”—won three acting Academy Awards.

Fifty years after “The Godfather” won at the Oscars,

“Everything Everywhere All at Once” triumphed with a much different immigrant experience. Its eccentric tale about a Chinese immigrant family—just the second feature by the Daniels, as the filmmaking duo is known—blended science fiction and alternate realities in the story of an ordinary woman and laundromat owner.

“The world is changing rapidly and I fear our stories are not keeping that pace,” said Kwan, who shared best director and best original screenplay with Scheinert. “Sometimes it’s a little scary knowing that movies move at the rate of years and the world on the internet is moving at the rate of milliseconds. But I have great faith in our stories.”

Yeoh became the first Asian woman to best actress, taking the award for her lauded performance in “Everything Everywhere All at Once.” The

60-year-old Malaysian-born Yeoh won her first Oscar for a performance that relied as much on her comic and dramatic chops as it did her kung fu skills. It’s the first best actress win for a non-white actress in 20 years.

“Ladies, don’t let anyone ever tell you you’re past your prime,” said Yeoh, who received a raucous standing ovation.

“Everything Everywhere,” released all the way back in March 2022, helped revive art-house cinemas after two years of pandemic, racking up more than \$100 million in ticket sales with scant initial expectations of Oscar glory. In winning best director, the Daniels—both 35 years old—are just the third directing pair to win the award, following Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins (“West Side Story”) and Joel and Ethan Coen (“No Country for Old Men”). Scheinert dedicated the award

“to the moms of the world.”

Best actor went to Brendan Fraser, culminating the former action star’s return to center stage for his physical transformation as a 600-lb. reclusive professor in “The Whale.” The best-actor race had been one of the closest contests of the night, but Fraser in the end edged out Austin Butler.

“So this is what the multiverse looks like,” said a clearly moved Fraser, pointing to the “Everything Everywhere All at Once” crew.

“Everything Everywhere All at Once,” a shock of freshness in a movie industry awash in sequels and reboots, helped Hollywood turn the page from one of the most infamous moments in Oscar history: The Slap. Jimmy Kimmel, hosting for the third time, pledged a ceremony with “no nonsense.” He said anyone who wanted to “get jiggy

with it” this year would have to come through a fearsome battalion of bodyguards, including Yeoh, Steven Spielberg and his show’s “security guard” Guillermo Rodriguez.

The former child star Quan capped his own extraordinary comeback with the Oscar for best supporting actor for his performance in the indie hit “Everything Everywhere All at Once.” Quan, beloved for his roles as Short Round in “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom” and Data in “Goonies,” had all but given up acting before being cast in “Everything Everywhere All at Once.”

His win, among the most expected of the night, was nevertheless one of the ceremony’s most moving moments. The audience—including his “Temple of Doom” director, Steven Spielberg—gave Quan a standing ovation as he

fought back tears.

“Mom, I just won an Oscar!” said Quan, 51, whose family fled Vietnam in the war when he was a child.

“They say stories like this only happen in the movies. I can’t believe it’s happening,” said Quan. “This is the American dream.”

Minutes later, Quan’s castmate Jamie Lee Curtis won for best supporting actress. Her win, in one of the most competitive categories this year, denied a victory for comic-book fans. Angela Bassett (“Black Panther: Wakanda Forever”) would have been the first performer to win an Oscar for a Marvel movie. Curtis is the rare Oscar winner whose parents were both Oscar nominees: Tony Curtis was nominated for “The Defiant Ones” in 1959 and Janet Leigh was nominated in 1961 for “Psycho.”

Coming-out creates tension between longtime friends

DEAR ABBY: A dear friend, “Lorraine,” contacted me because her daughter “Gabby” came out to her as bisexual and Lorraine knew I had experience with “this type of thing.” My daughter is bisexual.

Lorraine was repulsed by her daughter’s revelation and upset that Gabby expected her to be supportive and wear pride stickers, etc. My friend didn’t understand why she needed to be proud, and she told Gabby that even if she were a murderer she would still love her, and that was all that was important. I’m mortified and unsure how to handle this.

We fly my daughter’s flag outside her window. We wear pride gear and celebrate Pride Month with her. I tried explaining to Lorraine that we are supporting our daughter’s courage to come out and be comfortable and proud of who she is. When I said it, Lorraine snorted! Although we have been friends for many years, I never realized she felt this way.

I’m struggling with whether to break ties with her or continue trying to help her understand, love and support her daughter. Hearing the hate in her voice is extremely upsetting for me when we talk, but I hang onto a sliver of hope I can change her mind about this. Am I crazy to think that?

CONFLICTED FRIEND IN FLORIDA

DEAR FRIEND: Whether you should maintain the relationship with Lorraine may depend upon how long

she has known about Gabby’s sexual orientation. If the news is fresh and Lorraine has led a sheltered life, she may be shocked and dismayed by the revelation. That said, the conversation you had with her can only have been painful and insulting for you. You must care for the woman a lot, because a lesser person would have hung up on her. If you feel there is hope, keep trying to enlighten your friend. It may have an impact. However, if it doesn’t, draw the line.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am a young woman under 30 with three children. I have been married for five years. I just graduated from college. I have no direction (at least, don’t think I do) of where I am going. I feel like a scared little bee in a room full of bears. All I know is I want to make an impact on my family and go forward, breaking generations that never graduated from college.

I look at some people who have the same degree I do, and they’re working at discount department stores. It motivates me to buck that trend, but I don’t know where to start. What would you do, Abby?

MOTIVATED IN MARYLAND

DEAR MOTIVATED: If there is a career counseling service at the college from which you graduated, start there. Ask how you can apply the degree you earned in a

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



way that will benefit your family. Because so many others have this same college degree, inquire about whether you need to work on a master’s degree to gain employment in your field. Then get your husband on board, because you will need child care and financial help to achieve your goal. Check online for job resources and consider finding a temp job to help with family finances in the meantime.

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

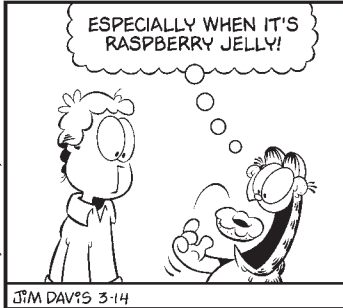
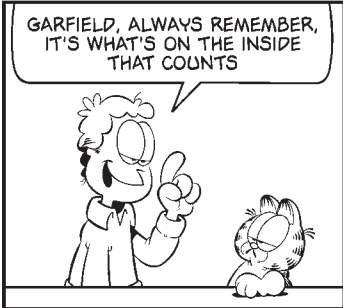
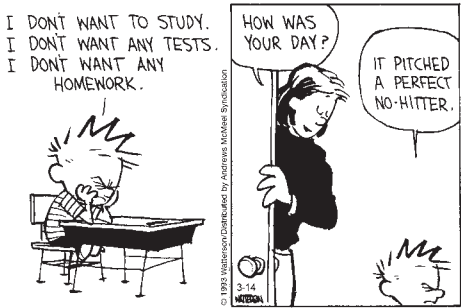
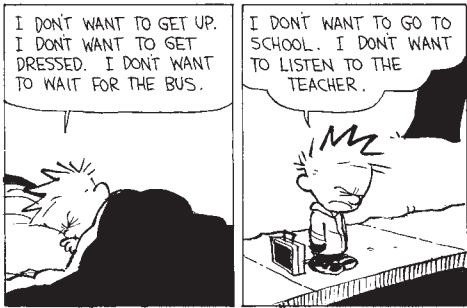
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

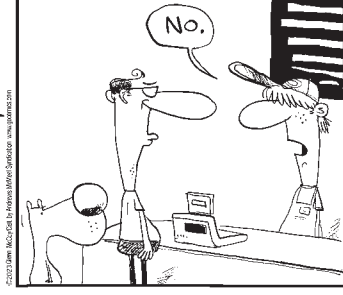


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Baby carriage
5 Financial pro
8 Former frosh
12 Shake-spearean villain
13 Peanut product
14 Study all night
15 Mix up
17 Gambling city
18 Alias letters
19 "— you serious?"
20 Mojito needs
21 Span. lady
22 Spigot
23 Ball-rolling game
26 Detroit team
30 Construction piece
31 Six-pack muscles
32 "Nope!"
33 Thins down
35 Penned
36 Distant

DOWN

37 Fib
38 Soaring
41 Ger. bird
42 GI's address
45 — Valley, Calif.
46 Showed, as a film
48 Diarist Frank
49 Paris pal
50 Bygone times
51 Two of a kind
52 Deleted
53 Tolkien creatures

3 Taj Mahal site
4 Extinct
5 Hooded snake
6 Heap
7 Pub
8 Sacred writings
9 Utah city
10 Glazier's sheet
11 Med. plan
16 Stallion's mate
20 Part of UNLV
21 More unkempt
22 Frank McCourt memoir
23 eBay offer
24 Kimono closer
25 Western st.
26 "Downtown Abbey" channel
27 "So that's it!"
28 Fanatic
29 That girl
31 — Lingus
34 Body art, for short
35 Saga-cious
37 Sensational
38 Now, on a memo
39 Director Wert-muller
40 Hotel chain
41 Summit
42 Shortly
43 Impudent
44 Rhyming tributes
46 Kenny G's instrument
47 Storm center

Solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterday's answer 3-14

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Betsy Brandt, 50; Megan Follows, 55; Billy Crystal, 75; Quincy Jones, 90.

Happy Birthday: Slow down, seize the moment, enjoy what life offers and do whatever it takes to not waste your energy on trivial matters and emotional arguments. Trust your intuition and promote your creative ideas. Expand your mind and make personal and spiritual growth your journey. Protect your home, family and reputation from anyone who makes you look bad or bullies you. Your numbers are 3, 16, 20, 27, 31, 39, 46.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Stick to the truth, question anything that sounds fictitious and verify information before passing it along. You'll have plenty of opportunities, but not all will have long-lasting effects. Don't overload your to-do list; pick what makes you happy and proceed. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Say no to joint ventures, lending or borrowing, or paying for someone else's mistake. Pay attention to your needs and what you are trying to accomplish. You are better off working alone to get things done correctly and on time. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't get angry; get moving. What you do, not what you say, will impact others. Getting along will be half the battle, especially when dealing with emotionally unstable people. Dissecting all the details will clear up confusion. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Read between the lines, consider every detail and don't be afraid to do things your way. Pay attention to your gut feeling; you'll know

what to do to get what you want. Don't let a peer step in and take over. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Mix business with pleasure and have fun. Your ability to connect with people and show them a good time will pay off and encourage you to challenge anyone who tries to stand in your way. Personal improvement will prompt a proposal. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't allow anyone to surpass you. Stand up for yourself, vouch for your ability to deliver on your promises and do whatever it takes to make a positive difference. Arguing will not help you excel, but solutions will. Aim to please. ★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Talks will reveal someone's true colors. Take a back seat, be a friendly observer and gather the information that helps you find the most beneficial path. A partnership will turn out to be more valuable than you anticipate. Romance is favored.★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Make money your priority. Whether it's investments, how you earn your living or how you use your skills and experience, go through the proper channels to ensure you don't have technical issues. Abide by the rules and regulations and call in favors. ★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Home is your haven and where you'll get the most accomplished. Redecorate, declutter or plan something special for someone you love. Don't feel you must appease outsiders or peers who try to take advantage of you. Know when to say no. ★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Rethink your objective, and you'll gain insight into unique ways to gain momentum and turn your skills into something cutting edge. Not everyone will agree with you, but the ones who do will help you get things up and running. ★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Be careful what you reveal. Focus on making opportunities that will help you get ahead financially. An energetic approach to life will keep you healthy, wealthy and wise. Don't shy away from a challenge if your input will influence the outcome. ★★★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't let your emotions dictate how well you do today. Let go of any animosity you feel. Approach discussions and problems with optimism, solutions and a smile on your face. Be willing to meet opposition halfway, and mutually beneficial deals will develop. ★★

Birthday Baby: You are imaginative, colorful and ambitious. You are influential and helpful.

★: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★★: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★★: Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

9					5				4
		1			4				
8	4	6	7			2			5
		9			2		6		1
		8	1	7	9				
1		2		4		3			9
7	8	3	2	5		9			6
								8	
6		5	4	8	7			2	

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	4	1	2	3	7	5	6	9
2	5	3	6	9	8	1	4	7
7	6	9	1	4	5	8	3	2
1	3	7	9	8	2	6	5	4
4	2	8	3	5	6	9	7	1
5	9	6	4	7	1	3	2	8
6	8	5	7	1	4	2	9	3
9	1	4	5	2	3	7	8	6
3	7	2	8	6	9	4	1	5

Difficulty: ★★ 3-14
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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

ENTERTAINING FRIENDS

Solution: 4 letters

C O E N T E R T A I N M E N T
P H V D N E K E E W T H E M E
U L A I T S T R E S S E D A R
T A A R T H L G L U N C H D A
E C A N C I L I K O O C T U P
N T H C N U R B A N D O S L E
S I M E D I T E V T F O A T R
I V N N T M N E P O K Y O S P
L I I E O I R G R A L C T F P
S T M V K S V M A I N E O L G
E I I I A Y A N S E E M A C U
M E D T N L T T I M L T I M E
A S I S E G A R E V E B A X S
G O F A M I L Y A H G U A L T
N C H A R A D E S P H O S T K

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Activities, Adults, Aperitivo, Beverages, Brunch, Charades, Charcuterie, Cocktails, Conversation, Cook, Dessert, Entertainment, Family, Food, Formal, Games, Guest, Host, Indulge, Invite, Kids, Laugh, Linen, Lunch, Main, Meet, Mingle, Mix, Movie, Party, Planning, Plate, Playlist, Prepare, Starter, Table, Talk, Theme, Time, Toast, Utensils, Weekend
Yesterday's Answer: Report

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STUMPED?

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Bridges, Nets hold off late rally to beat Nuggets, 122-120



DENVER (AP)—Mikal Bridges scored 25 points and the Brooklyn Nets withstood a late rally and another triple-double by Nikola Jokic to beat the Denver Nuggets 122-120 on Sunday.

Nic Claxton had 20 points and Dorian Finney-Smith and Spencer Dinwiddie added 15 points each for Brooklyn, which has won five of its last six games.

Jokic had 35 points, 20 rebounds and 11 assists for his league-leading 27th triple-double of the season but missed a contested 14-foot jumper with 5 seconds left that would have given the Nuggets the lead.

Michael Porter Jr. added 23 points for Denver, which matched a season high with its third consecutive loss.

76ERS 112, WIZARDS 93

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Joel Embiid scored 34 points, James Harden had 18 points and 14 assists and Philadelphia cruised to a wire-to-wire win over the fading Washington.

Tobias Harris added 11 points and De'Anthony Melton 10 for the 76ers (45-22), who have won five in a row to keep pressure on Milwaukee and Boston for the top two seeds in a crowded Eastern Conference.

Washington (31-37) got a career-high 25 points from Corey Kispert and 13 from Bradley Beal, but dropped its fifth game in its last six. The Wizards also fell out of a



Brooklyn Nets forward Mikal Bridges, center, is trapped with the ball as, from left to right, Denver Nuggets forward Bruce Brown, center Nikola Jokic and forward Aaron Gordon defend in the second half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, March 12, 2023, in Denver.

tie for the 10th and final spot in the Eastern Conference's play-in tournament.

CAVALIERS 114, HORNETS 108

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Darius Garland had 28 points, Donovan Mitchell added 23 and Cleveland overcame a 16-point second-half deficit for its fourth win in the last five games.

Evan Mobley added 18 points and nine rebounds for the Cavaliers (43-27), who trailed most of the game.

Garland, who sat out Friday night's loss to Miami with a

quad injury, shot 8 of 20 from the field and was 10 of 13 from the foul line, including a free throw with 10.7 seconds left to seal the win.

Terry Rozier had 27 points to lead the Hornets, who were playing their second game in less than 24 hours. P.J. Washington added 19 points and Nick Richards had 15 points and 12 rebounds for Charlotte (22-48).

KNICKS 112, LAKERS 108

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Julius Randle scored 33 points

in a bounce-back performance, RJ Barrett got 20 of his 30 in the second half, and New York snapped a three-game losing streak.

Immanuel Quickley had 15 points as the Knicks survived a ferocious late rally by the Lakers to salvage a weekend split in Los Angeles without second-leading scorer Jalen Brunson, who has a bruised left foot.

D'Angelo Russell had a season-high 33 points and eight assists despite managing just two points in the fourth quarter for the Lakers, whose three-game winning

streak ended with only their fourth loss in 12 games since the trade deadline.

Anthony Davis had 17 points and 16 rebounds, but the Lakers fell behind during an erratic shooting performance by three starters: Malik Beasley, Troy Brown Jr. and Jarred Vanderbilt were a combined 5 for 23, missing 14 of their 16 3-point attempts

PELICANS 127, TRAIL BLAZERS 110

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Trey Murphy III hit a career-best nine 3-pointers to

highlight his career-high 41 points, and New Orleans won for the second time in two games as it tries to stay in contention for a Western Conference postseason berth.

CJ McCollum had 22 points and 11 assists for New Orleans, which made 18 of its first 30 3-point attempts as a team before finishing 19 of 40 (47.5%) from deep. Josh Richardson scored 19 points for the Pelicans.

Herbert Jones added 16 points, and Jonas Valanciunas had 11 points and 12 rebounds to help New Orleans win handily despite playing for a second straight game without high-scoring wing Brandon Ingram (right ankle).

Anfernee Simons scored 17 for Portland, while Shaedon Sharpe and Kevin Knox each scored 14 points and Cam Reddish added 11.

THUNDER 102, SPURS 90

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Jalen Williams scored 21 points and Oklahoma City used a balanced effort on offense without Shai Gilgeous-Alexander to beat San Antonio.

Ousmane Dieng had 17 points and Josh Giddey added 17 for the Thunder, who won their second in a row and fifth in six games. Oklahoma City tied Utah for 10th place in the West at 33-35, but the Thunder hold the tiebreaker after winning the season series 2-1.

San Antonio's Zach Collins had 23 points and 11 rebounds for his ninth career double-double. Devonte' Graham added 20 points.

Lawyers say former NBA star Shawn Kemp fired in self-defense

TACOMA, Wash. (AP)—Former NBA star Shawn Kemp acted in self-defense when he exchanged gunfire in a Washington parking lot while trying to retrieve a stolen cell phone and other items, his attorneys said Thursday.

Kemp, 53, was arrested by Tacoma police Wednesday for investigation of a drive-by shooting but was released from jail Thursday afternoon without charges having been filed. The Pierce County Prosecutor's Office said it would not file charges pending further investigation.

"We're grateful they didn't rush to judgment," said Seattle criminal defense lawyer Tim Leary, who is representing Kemp.

In a written statement, another Kemp attorney, W. Scott Boatman, said Kemp's vehicle was broken into Tuesday night and several items were taken — including an iPhone. Kemp

tracked the phone's location to an occupied car at the Tacoma Mall, and when Kemp confronted the individuals inside, they shot at him, and he returned fire, Boatright said.

"There was not a drive by shooting as previously reported and Mr. Kemp's actions were reasonable and legally justified," Boatman said. "Mr. Kemp met with law enforcement at the scene in an attempt to assist in the matter."

Tacoma police said they recovered a gun at the scene.

Kemp, who has two licensed cannabis stores in Seattle, was a six-time NBA all-star and played for the Seattle SuperSonics from 1989 to 1997. He also played for Cleveland, Portland and Orlando.

Kemp debuted in the NBA during the 1989-90 season as a 20-year-old who had never played college basketball. He became known for his high-flying, athletic dunks.

Raptors' VanVleet heavily criticizes officiating after loss

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Fred VanVleet tried to take a double breath before addressing reporters. But the Toronto Raptors guard was unable to suppress his frustration with referee Ben Taylor and his crew.

VanVleet was extremely critical of Taylor after the Raptors' 108-100 loss to the Los Angeles Clippers on Wednesday night — not only for being called for a technical foul, but for the disparity in fouls and free throws. He was fined \$30,000 by the NBA on Thursday for public criticism of the officiating.

"I don't mind it. I'll take the fine. I don't really care. I thought Ben Taylor was terrible tonight," VanVleet said while using a profanity. "I think that most nights, you know out of the three, there's one or two that just (mess) the game up. It's been like that a couple of games in a row. Denver was tough, obviously. "You come out tonight,

competing pretty hard and I get a (lousy) tech that changes the whole dynamic of the game, changed the whole flow of the game."

VanVleet, who is in his sixth year in the NBA, was called for his eighth technical of the season with 7:02 remaining in the third quarter. Paul George made the free throw to put the Clippers up 65-57.

VanVleet said the reason he picked up the technical was because he was imploring his team to play through what he thought were some questionable calls, albeit with more colorful language. He also said he understood there is a fine line on what he can say, but thought Taylor didn't give him enough leeway.

Toronto was called for 23 fouls to Los Angeles' 18, but the Clippers were 24 of 31 from the line while the Raptors were 13 of 14.

"We weren't getting our money's worth on a lot of

those," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said of the fouls. "Probably a little bit of contact. We didn't adjust (to the style of play) because we were back in the same situation."

VanVleet and the Raptors were already in a foul mood about officiating before Wednesday's game. They lost Monday night at Denver 118-113 after Scottie Barnes was ejected by Scott Foster with 28.3 seconds left and the Raptors trailing by one.

The technical came after Toronto's Jakob Poeltl was called for a foul. Denver made the three subsequent free throws to ice the game.

Of VanVleet's eight technicals, three have been assessed by Taylor with one other coming from another official on a game Taylor was working. Taylor is in his 10th season as an NBA official.

"At a certain point as a player, you feel it's personal and it's never a good place to be," VanVleet said.

"That's not why we lost tonight, we got outplayed, but it definitely makes it tougher to overcome."

VanVleet was already facing a \$3,000 fine for the technical. He will face a bigger one for going off on officiating.

"I think the jurisdiction and the power trip that we've been on this year with some of our officials in this league is getting out of hand and I'll take my fine for speaking on it," VanVleet said. "Most of the refs are trying hard, I like a lot of the refs, they're trying hard, they're pretty fair, and communicate well. And then you got the other ones who just want to be (idiots) and just kind of (screw) up the game. And no one's coming to see that. They come to see the players."

"And I think we're losing a little bit of the fabric of what the NBA is and was, and it's been disappointing this season."

Meneses homers twice, Mexico clobbers US, 11-5, in WBC



PHOENIX

(AP)—Joey Meneses hit two homers, including a crucial three-run shot in the fourth inning, to lead Mexico to an 11-5 win over the United States in the World Baseball Classic on Sunday at Chase Field.

Meneses got the sellout crowd of 47,534—mostly cheering for Mexico—on its feet in the first inning with his first homer, which gave Mexico a 2-0 lead. Those cheers got even louder in the fourth for his encore, which was a blast deep into the left-center seats that brought home Randy Arozarena and Alex Verdugo and made it 7-1.

Meneses hit his first homer off starter Nick Martinez, who took the loss, and the second off Brady Singer. Mexico starter Patrick Sandoval gave up one run over three innings, earning the win.

The 30-year-old Meneses became an unlikely MLB slugger in 2022 after spending over a decade in the minors and playing overseas. He debuted with the Nationals last season, batting .324 with 13 homers in just 222 at-bats.

Mexico kept piling onto the lead in the eighth, sending nine players to the plate and scoring four runs off Daniel Bard to make it 11-2.

The Americans scored three runs in the eighth to make the final outcome more respectable. Tim Anderson had two hits and three RBIs, while Will Smith hit a solo homer.

In Tokyo, Japan won Group B with a 4-0 record and will play a quarterfinal Thursday against Italy, which advanced along with Cuba from Group A on tiebreakers. Matt Harvey got the win as Italy defeated the Netherlands 7-1, causing all five teams to finish 2-2.

South Korea beat the Czech Republic 7-3 in the day's other Pool B game, and Cuba defeated Taiwan 7-1 in Pool A.

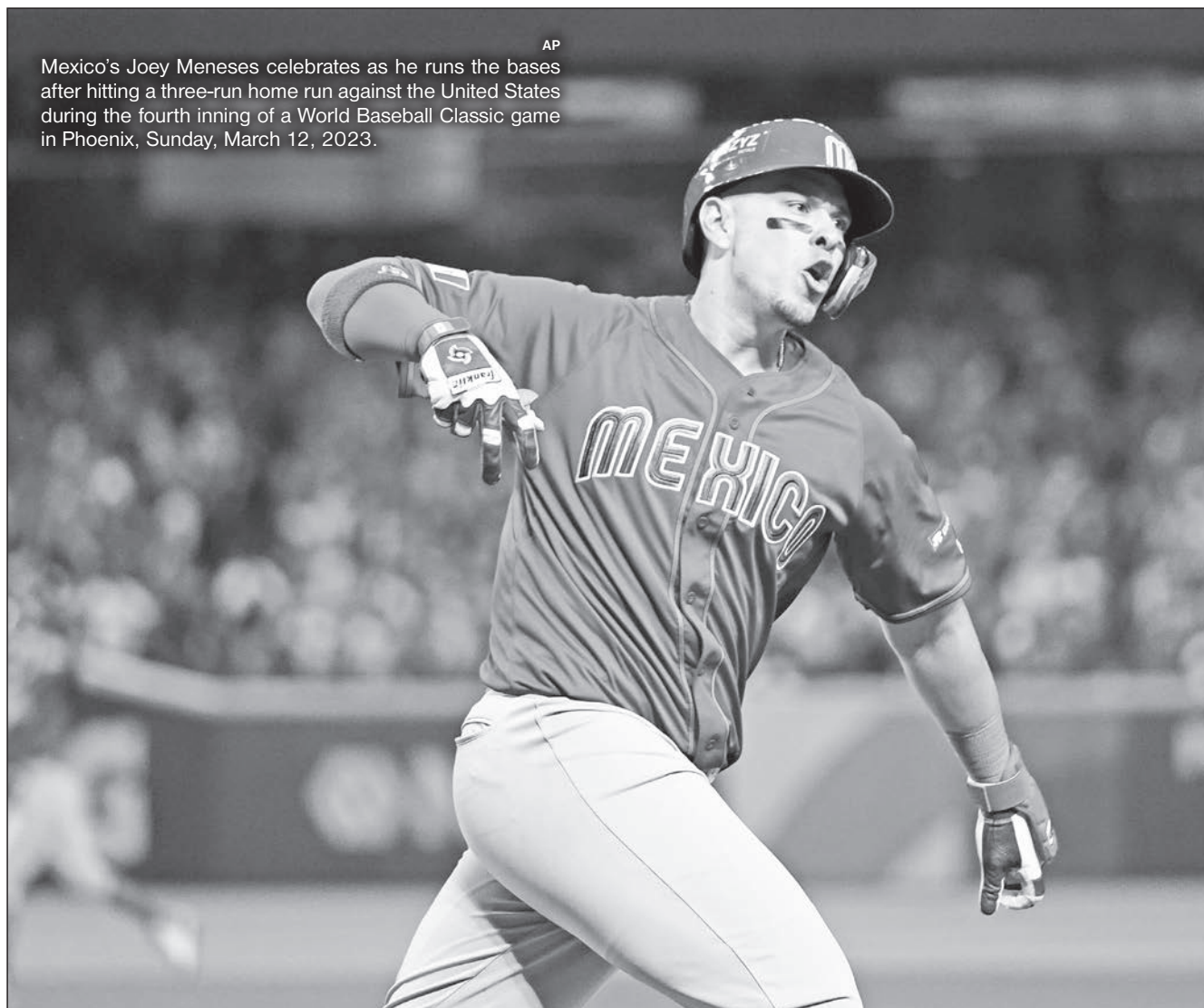
In Pool C, Canada beat Great Britain 18-8 before Mexico's big win over the U.S. In Pool D, Venezuela beat Puerto Rico 9-6 and Israel topped Nicaragua 3-1.

AUSTRALIA 8, CZECH REPUBLIC 3 TOKYO (AP)—Australia defeated the Czech Republic 6-3 on Monday and advanced to the quarterfinals.

It's the first time Australia has reached the second round after appearing in all four previous tournaments.

Australia finished 3-1 in Group B behind Japan, which was 4-0.

Australia will face Cuba, the top team in Group A, in



AP
Mexico's Joey Meneses celebrates as he runs the bases after hitting a three-run home run against the United States during the fourth inning of a World Baseball Classic game in Phoenix, Sunday, March 12, 2023.

one quarterfinal. Japan will play Italy, which finished second in Group A in Taichung, Taiwan. Both quarterfinals are at the Tokyo Dome.

Logan Wade's two-run double in the seventh off the right field wall broke a 1-1 tie and drove in Robbie Glendinning and Aaron Whitefield.

Australia took a 1-0 lead in the first on Alex Hall's solo homer off Martin Schneider. It was the only run—and only hit—that Schneider gave up in going 5 1/3 innings. He was pulled after reaching the 65-pitch limit, giving up one hit, and one run with one strikeout.

The Czech Republic tied it at 1 in the third on Eric Sogard's single that scored Petr Zyma.

Australia padded its lead by making it 6-1 in the eighth, and again it was Hall—this time with a triple—that scored Ulrich Bojarski and Tim Kennelly. Glendinning's subsequent single added another.

Marek Chlup's two-run single in the eighth narrowed the margin to 6-3, but Australia replied with two more of its own in the ninth.

JAPAN 7, AUSTRALIA 1

TOKYO (AP)—Shohei Ohtani hit a three-run homer that landed just below his image on a video advertising board, sending Japan to a win over Australia on Sunday.

Ohtani also walked twice and finished with four RBIs. His first-inning drive traveled

an estimated 448 feet.

Ohtani turned on a hanging curveball from Will Sherriff, who didn't even watch the flight of the ball into the Tokyo Dome's right-field seats, bending and putting hands on his knees. It was the first home run of the tournament for Ohtani, who is 6 for 12 with eight RBIs and seven walks.

Winner Yoshinobu Yamamoto struck out eight in four scoreless innings, allowing one hit and no walks. He threw 42 of 60 pitches for strikes, averaging 95.2 mph with his fastball and topping out at 96.9 mph. The 24-year-old right-hander was the Pacific League's MVP for the Orix Buffaloes in 2021 and 2022, and pitched a no-hitter last June 22 against the Saitama Seibu Lions.

Robbie Perkins was the only Australia batter to reach against Yamamoto, on a one-out single in the third. Alex Hall homered in the ninth off Hiroto Takahashi, who finished a five-hitter.

VENEZUELA 9, PUERTO RICO 6

MIAMI (AP)—Salvador Pérez homered, doubled twice, singled and had five RBIs as Venezuela improved to 2-0 in Pool D on Sunday.

Venezuela struck quickly with a four-run first against Puerto Rico starter José Berrios. Pérez hit an RBI single and Anthony Santander followed with his second homer of the tournament, a three-run drive that cleared the wall in right.

Pérez made it 7-0 with a three-run shot off reliever Fernando Cruz in the second.

Venezuela starter Pablo López was the beneficiary of the early run support. López struck out six, while limiting Puerto Rico to one run and two hits in 4 2/3 innings.

Eddie Rosario homered for Puerto Rico, which is 1-1.

Down 9-1, Puerto Rico tried to rally with a four-run sixth against reliever Andres Machado.

MJ Melendez's RBI double in the eighth got Puerto Rico within three before Silvino Bracho relieved Jhoulys Chacin and retired Javier Baez on a pop out and Rosario on a double-play ground-er. Bracho then pitched a perfect ninth for the save.

CANADA 18, GREAT BRITAIN 8, 7 INNINGS

PHOENIX (AP)—Tyler O'Neill had four hits and four RBIs, Freddie Freeman added two hits and Canada beat Great Britain 18-8 on Sunday.

The game lasted just seven innings because the WBC has a mercy rule during pool play. If one team is leading by 10 or more runs after an inning following the seventh, the game is over.

Canada scored in every inning, including five runs in the first, four in the third and six more in the fourth.

Great Britain took a 3-0 lead in the top of the first, but had a tough afternoon on the pitcher's mound, giving up 17

hits and 16 walks. Harry Ford had one of Britain's highlights with a three-run homer.

Akeel Morris took the loss, giving up five runs in just 2/3 of an inning. Philippe Aumont got the win.

ISRAEL 3, NICARAGUA 1

MIAMI (AP)—Garrett Stubbs hit a two-run double in a three-run eighth inning, helping Israel rally for the win in its WBC opener Sunday.

Stubbs had two of Israel's seven hits. His bases-loaded double off New York Yankees reliever Jonathan Loáisiga drove in Spencer Horwitz and Noah Mendlinger with two out in the eighth. Horwitz tied it earlier in the inning with an RBI single.

Winner Richard Bleier had two strikeouts in one relief inning.

Nicaragua took a 1-0 lead in the fifth when Steven Leyton's double scored Sandy Bermudez. But it dropped to 0-2 in WBC pool play.

ITALY 7, NETHERLANDS 1

TAICHUNG, Taiwan (AP)—Harvey pitched four innings of one-run ball for Italy, and Milwaukee Brewers prospect Sal Frelick had three hits and two RBIs Sunday.

Italian players had to wait a few minutes after the final out to find out they advanced with Cuba while the Netherlands, Taiwan and Panama were eliminated. The group

was decided by runs allowed divided by outs, and Cuba (15/108, .139) finished first, followed by Italy (17/108, .157), Netherlands (19/102, .186), Panama (21/105, .200) and Taiwan (31/105, .295).

Chadwick Tromp homered in the third for the Netherlands, but Italy went ahead to stay with six runs in the fourth.

Nicky Lopez had two hits and two RBIs for the Italians, managed by Mike Piazza.

The Netherlands, needing three runs to advance, put two on with no outs in the ninth against Mitchell Stumpo. Juremi Profar struck out, Tromp popped out to the pitcher in foul territory near the plate and Ray-Patrick Diddy struck out.

Dutch left fielder Jurickson Profar made a sprawling backhand catch on Dominic Fletcher's two-out fly in the eighth, saving two runs.

Padres infielder Xander Bogaerts went 4 for 15 (.267) with one RBI for the Netherlands in the tournament. Jurickson Profar was 3 for 13 (.231) with one RBI, Didi Gregorius was 3 for 12 with three RBIs and Jonathan Schoop 1 for 13 (.077) with no RBIs.

SOUTH KOREA 7, CZECH REPUBLIC 3

TOKYO (AP)—Ha-Seong Kim of the San Diego Padres hit two solo homers for South Korea on Sunday.

Se Woong Park struck out eight in 4 2/3 innings for South Korea, which improved to 1-2 in Group B and will play winless China in its final group game.

St. Louis Cardinals infielder Tommy Edman hit a two-run single for South Korea. Kim's homer in the sixth made it 6-0.

Matej Mensik put the Czech Republic on the board with a two-run double in the seventh. Kim hit his second homer of the game in the bottom half.

Loser Lukas Ercoli allowed six runs in 1 1/3 innings.

CUBA 7, TAIWAN 1

TAICHUNG, Taiwan (AP)—Yoán Moncada and Erisbel Arruebarrena homered, leading Cuba to the win Sunday.

Cuba broke out to a 4-0 lead in the first inning. Alfredo Despaigne drove in Moncada and Luis Robert with a double, and Arruebarrena added a two-run shot.

Moncada and Robert play for the Chicago White Sox.

Cuba starter Elian Leyva pitched 2 1/3 scoreless innings, striking out four. Loser Shih-Peng Chen allowed five runs—four earned and five hits in 1 1/3 innings.

Kim conquers March CWGA tourney

By MARK RABAGO

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

SaeHee Kim finally hit paydirt in the CNMI Women's Golf Association after winning the March tourney last Saturday, March 11, at the east course of the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

Kim shot a net score of 65 to beat a field of 12 players. She fired a gross score of 80 following a 41 in the front nine and a 39 in the back nine, but it was slashed to the best score in March after her 15 handicap was deducted.

"My driver was working so well and also my wedges. Missed some birdies because of my putter but overall, I'm very satisfied with my game," said told *Saipan Tribune*.

Kim said the almost perfect course conditions last Saturday played a part in her winning the monthly competition. "The weather was nice



All 12 players of the CNMI Women's Golf Association March tourney pose for a group photo at the east course of the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort last Saturday.

and hot and there was not so much wind."

Kim said she's happy to finally win in the CWGA after being a member for two and a

half years.

"I dedicate my win to my husband who is my coach and also to all CWGA members," said the right-hander

who first picked up golf on Jan. 1, 2017.

Coming in second to Kim in the March tourney was last month's winner, Niramai

Koebel, who carded a net score of 69 after shooting a gross score of 83 (41-42).

Third place went to Yuko Togawa after the Northern



Kim

Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 women's coach closed with a net of 72 (gross of 81, 43-38).

The rest of the 12-player field in the CWGA tourney, with their net scores in parenthesis, were as follows: Sonny Son Hyun (72); Clara Chung (72); Emily Qiu (73); Sherlyn Jones (74); Lorraine Babauta (74); Rose Rohringer (76); Dol Yamagishi (78); Mio Kim (79); and Terry Guerrero (85).

CWGA will hold its season-ending two-day CWGA Annual Tournament next month on April 15 and 16 at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort's east and west courses.

The club continues to look for new members as the new season continues. For those interested in becoming a member of CWGA or for more information, contact CWGA president Yuko Togawa at 287-9856, vice president Lorraine Babauta at 287-0621, or treasurer Lou Kim at 783-7317.

GECKOS

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guided missiles, the Geckos were hard-pressed to close the deal and were unable to handle the hard-serving Cai.

All of a sudden it was 19-20 and Agape appeared on the verge of forcing a third and deciding set as Cai was still in the service area.

But alas Lady Luck smiled on the Geckos as a soft dink ended the game anticlimactically when the volleyball fell on an open space in the Torchbearers' side of the court.

SIS players and their supporters justifiably erupted in celebration after the last point before the two teams met at centercourt to exchange pleasantries after a hard-fought championship.

Aside from swimmer-turned-spiker Sikkell and netter-turned-blocker Wessel, the victorious Geckos were also made up of Theo and Daniel Joab, Landon Pudney, Aiden Camacho, and Allan Cabrera. They were coached by Stacey

Eno and Mili Saiki.

Eno, who is a fifth grade teacher at SIS, heaped praise on her boys for sweeping not only the playoffs but the whole season.

"These guys are good. They have great skills. They've been practicing together with the high school for so long. I just needed to teach them the next level and they executed all season and they stepped up to it," she said.

Eno admitted, however, that the SIS varsity team struggled initially with the new volleyball concepts she was introducing.

"It's confusing at first to learn some of the higher level things, but they stepped up and did it and it was great. They did a great job, eager, and coachable and they will be winners through the entire time they're playing sports."

As for surrendering three of the last four points on Cai's killer service game, Eno said she'd always known that everything worth fighting for is always hard to get.

"It wouldn't be tournament

play if it doesn't go back and forth and the margin is three or four points up and down. If we didn't make it interesting, it wouldn't be SIS because we like to make the coaches panic quite a lot."

She also gave credit to Agape players and their coaches for giving them a tough game in the finals.

"We've faced Agape quite a few times so we know they have a couple of servers that go for runs on us of five or six points, but we had that timeout just to encourage our players to play point for point at a time. So they did a great job," said Eno.

Asked whether the SIS middle school varsity will look for a repeat next season after winning it all for the first time this year, the head coach said while they will be losing a bulk of the team to graduation they will certainly try.

"I think we have two seventh graders and the rest are eighth graders. So I think five are going up to high school so it's going to be an entirely different team next year, but also

an entirely different team for SIS' high school team. You're gonna have two unstoppable varsity and JV teams next year, and I'm looking forward to seeing the mix. We've already been practicing together and it's been amazing. So watch out everybody," said Eno, who also coaches SIS' high school team.

Last but certainly not the least, the SIS middle school varsity coach thanked the team's supporters for the successful season.

"I wanna thank Miss Mili and all the boys for always giving their 100% and Dr.

NMI

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However, it was [in the] 87th minute when Kaithlyn Chavez found the back of the net that started from a throw in play from Audrey Castro to Jannah [Casarino], who passed it to Rizza [Relucio]."

The team consists of the aforementioned Chavez, Castro, Casarino, and Relucio

and also includes Mia Abuan, Allyssya Angeles, Christina Atalig, Joselynn Atalig, Nathanette Blas, Erish Carreon, Aubrey Castro, Julie Chavez, Megan Elayda, Stephanie Flores, Tamia Kileleman-Hix, Tyana Kileleman-Hix, Deseha Mendiola, Pia Nge-wakl, Sophia Quintos, and Cassie Regan.

They were joined by Attao-Toves; Luam Khen Koo, head of delegation; Chi Ming Tang,

second round before upending Agape in the semifinals to book the first final seat.

Agape followed SIS' undefeated run in the playoffs at least into the Final Four. The Torchbearers and head coach En Yang Pang kicked off their playoff campaign by beating Chacha Ocean View Middle School. They then followed it up by defeating Tanapag Middle and DanDan Middle School before bowing to SIS in the semis. It advanced to the championship match after downing Francisco M. Sablan Middle School in the loser's bracket finals.

head coach; Mae Ito, assistant coach; Ronnel Ocanada, assistant coach; Mikky Vargas, communications manager; Hazel Mabasa, team doctor; and Yu Hung Lee, assistant team manager.

There were eight groups in the qualifiers and the top finisher in each group will advance to the 2024 AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup to be hosted by Uzbekistan in March 2024.

NMSA

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of the month, Nate Guerrero of badminton won for February; Coby Santos of basketball won for April; for June, Colin Sinclair of tennis received the award along with weightlifting's Raymond Santos, David Barnhouse, Jason Limes, and Joey Colisao; Javin Okawa of bodybuilding won for November; and Manny Si-

tion of cycling won for the month December.

The female adult athlete of the month of January and April was Tania Tan who also received the Athlete of the Year; Alliyah Fernandez of basketball received the award for January; Janelle Pangilinan of badminton received for February; E'anna Won of basketball received for June; Zarinae Sapong of athletics won for July; Denise Myers of athletics received for Octo-

ber; Kaia Travilla of basketball received for November; and Robyn Spaeth of cycling received for December.

The team of the month for February was the NMI National Badminton Team consisting of Nathan Guerrero, Andreau Galvez, Jordan Pangilinan, Ezekiel Macario, Daniel Macario, Leonard Manuel, Paulo Quidato, Janelle Pangilinan, Jenine Savellano, Jeanalyn Cardinio, Patricia Surima,

Windy Fernandez, and Mikamaika Serrano.

For the month of April, the team of the month went to Saipan Southern High School boys outrigger team made up of Tyler Andrew, Skye Kawgdoo, Philip Aldan, Marion Sayas, Josh Socorro, Eric David, Mikee Peters, Noel Roque, Casiano Aldan, and Jerriko Gaan.

The month of June went to the CNMI Weightlifting National Team. The team con-

sists of Pipit Ball, Cheyanne Manuel, Riella Ann Ichio, Joseph Tudela, Angel San Nicolas, Raymond Santos, Jason Limes, Leowell Cristobal, Joey Colisao, Emmanuel Aquino, Leonardo Apelo Jr., Antonette Labausa, and David Barnhouse Jr.

The Saipan International School U18 female cross country team won the award for October. The team includes Julie Ann Chavez, Serin Chung, Kaithlyn Chavez,

Tiana Cabrera, and Aubrey Castro.

The SIS middle school badminton team won the award for November. They are Nara Kim, Lina Tsukagoshi, Frank Li, Allen He, Michael Zhou, and Jason Yu.

Finally, for the month of December, the NMI National Swimming Team won the award. The team consists of Isaiah Aleksenko, Jinnosuke Suzuki, Maria Batallones, and Shoko Litulumar.



Bridges, Nets hold
off late rally to beat
Nuggets 122-120

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Kim conquers
March CWGA
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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Geckos stick it to ACS in MS v-ball finals

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Saipan International School boys varsity volleyball team capped a perfect season by beating Agape Christian School in the championship match of the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2022-2023 last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.



The Geckos' Magnificent 7—they actually only had seven players—defeated the Torchbearers in straight sets, 21-10, 21-19, with Moshe Sikkell and Nason Wessel imposing their height and athleticism on the net in the first set. It became dicey in the second

set though, as Agape fought tooth and nail and gave the Geckos a scare before ultimately losing.

With the Geckos leading 20-16, Raffy Cai breathed new life on the Torchbearers' fading hopes by using his jumpserve to perfection.

With his service mimicking
See GECKOS on Page 19

NMI loses in AFC qualifiers, snags goal against home team

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



A 1 - though the NMI U 2 0 Women's National Soccer Team lost in the Asian Football Confederation U20 Asian Cup Qualifiers held last Friday to Sunday, they managed to snag a goal against host country Palestine.

The team went into a frenzy after Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez scored a goal against Palestine in their first game of the Asian Football Confederation U20 Asian Cup Qualifiers last Fri-

day. However, Palestine came back and won, 3-1.

In their game against Nepal on Sunday, they were blanked, 0-6.

Team manager Catherine Attao-Toves said in an email that "As we saw in the Palestine vs Nepal game, Palestine was more physical than technical. It took some time for the team to adjust to the physicality of the game, with no whistle. Going into the locker room at half time, we were still at 0-0. Unfortunately, Palestine came out scored at the 50th minute and 61st minute—both on our errors.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NMI U20 Women's National Soccer Team player Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez, left, goes up against a Palestine player last Friday in the Asian Football Confederation U20 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Palestine.



MARK RABAGO

Saipan International School boys varsity volleyball team players and coaches pose with Public School System athletics program director Nick Gross and other officials after winning the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2022-2023 championship last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

NMSA announces 2022 athletes, teams of the month

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



Several student and adult athletes along with teams were named the Athletes of the Month for the respective months in 2022 during the 2022 NMSA Annual Sports Award Banquet last Tuesday evening at the Hibiscus Hall of the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

Only two student athletes—Isaiah Aleksenko and Kaithlyn Chavez—were named Athlete of the Month for two months.

Aleksenko claimed the title for February and December in the sport of swimming and triathlon, while Chavez claimed February and October for athletics and triathlon.

Other male student athletes were Andrei Derek Tenorio for the sport of basketball and received the award for the month of April; Juhn Tenorio received the award for June for swimming; Michael Miller for athletics received the award for October; and Lance Lerio for the sport of basketball received the award for November.

For the other female athlete awardees, Destiny Pangelinan for the sport of basketball won the award for April; Zhimin Jin

for golf received the award for June; Azriel Fatialofa for basketball received the award for November; and Maria Batal-

lones for swimming received the award for December.

For the male adult athletes
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LEIGH GASES

NMSA 2022 Male Student Athletes of the Month, Isaiah Aleksenko, fourth from left, Andrei Derek Tenorio, Juhn Tenorio, Michael Miller, and Lance Lerio pose with their plaques during the 2022 NMSA Annual Sports Award Banquet last Tuesday evening at the Hibiscus Hall of the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.



LEIGH GASES

NMSA 2022 Female Student Athletes of the Month Destiny Pangelinan, fourth from left, Zhimin Jin, Azriel Fatialofa, and Maria Batallones pose with their plaques during the 2022 NMSA Annual Sports Award Banquet last Tuesday evening at the Hibiscus Hall of the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.